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Press Article

Food Scarcity - Mini-livestock Here we Come

"Can Meat and Fish Consumption be Sustainable?" Such is the question posed by the Worldwatch Institute (a think tank) in its State of the World 2008 report. Not surprisingly, they find that intensive farming of conventional products like beef, pork, salmon and tuna is already creating ecological havoc -- and yet it cannot keep pace with the urgent needs of a burgeoning world population.

However, there was a time and place when hungry farmers rejoiced to see hordes of locusts blackening the skies. They collected them by the cartload and consumed them roasted and preserved for months to come.

So more provocatively Worldwatch point out that we should embrace the idea of consuming "mini-livestock": these are the bugs, worms and insects forming a common part of the diet in various parts of the world.

As I have mentioned on many occasions, such "animal matter" is actually more authentic human food than the beef, pork, tuna etc... that we are so used to eating now. Hunter-gatherers around the world still eat insects of all kinds and anything is fair game. They collect the immature and adult forms of grasshoppers and crickets; the caterpillars of silk moths; and the larvae and pupae of beetles, bees, ants, flies and hornets.

Italian biologist, Dr. Maurizio Paoletti, Padua University, studies mini-livestock eaten by forager tribes today. He finds that the larvae of palm weevils, as raised by certain Amazonian tribes, have an excellent nutritional profile and no drawbacks. The Australian Aborigines prize the witchety grub, a kind of large caterpillar up to 3" long and 1/2" in diameter. It is relatively fatty (19%) and, when toasted in the embers of a fire, tastes a bit like roasted sweet-corn. The Yanomamo Indians of the Amazon and the Cahuilla Indians of California, eat (or used to eat) worms of all kinds. The Cahuilla wet the ground and perform ritual drumming to bring worms to the surface.

You can read more at my website www.naturaleater.com. Check out "Exotic Foods" in my online book Deadly Harvest, chapter 3; "Earthworms of the Amazon" in Newsletter January 2003; and "Beetlemania" in Newsletter March 2001.

Personally, I find it difficult to get my mind around eating such creatures, although I only had to cross the English Channel to eat frogs legs and snails. But I have, unsuspectingly, eaten all kinds of unrecognizable yet tasty concoctions in Arabia, Asia and Africa. Only

after the event did I discover that they were made from some unmentionable animal part. So our resistance is all in the mind!

As I say in my first book "Natural Eating", Chapter Two, page 1:

"The great arctic explorer Amundsen on his expeditions to the North Pole used to live on frozen raw seal - the skin, the blood, the guts - everything - just like his Eskimo mentors. He was asked 'how could you do that?' Amundsen replied 'People like what they are used to eating'. He had to get used to liking a different pattern of eating."

And if the truth be known, many people are already - and quite insouciantly - eating many gruesome animal parts - in hamburgers, sausages, and many other processed meats. Maybe the hotdogs of the future will also include minced up mini-livestock!

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Geoff Bond is a nutritional anthropologist and a recognized authority on what it means to be human in lifestyle terms. He gives teach-ins for the medical profession and general public.

Geoff's latest book, *Deadly Harvest*, is the reference work for lifestyle anthropology and the mastering of degenerative disease. It is stocked by all good bookstores in Cyprus.

More information about Geoff's work on his website: www.naturaleater.com.

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