



- [Shopping Cart](#)
- [How to Order](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

[Back to the blog](#)

What's the Matter with Meat?

by: Catherine J. on 09/20/2012

Posted in: [Food](#)

Email Facebook Twitter ShareThis

Nothing is wrong with meat—if eaten in moderation. So declares Eleanor Boyle in *High Steaks: Why and How to Eat Less Meat*. Boyle gives evidence that the abundance of meat produced by factory farming is a hefty contributor to the high environmental stakes we're facing, and shows how lessening our meat consumption will benefit not only our bodies but the planet.

[High Steaks](#)

Boyle questions North Americans' meatcentric diets. An everyday dinner will revolve around steak, chops or chicken. Then there is fast food--in other words, the fun meat—"Hey, let's grab a burger!" Or it's Appy Tuesday--fifty cents a wing! Advertisers would have us become meat snobs: it's *Angus* beef, and *New Zealand* lamb (but BC lamb, for instance, is known to be delectable). Summertime is barbeque time and that equals you-know-what.

Boyle calls it a binge. And it is a binge that cannot be sustained. Not by the planet and not by our arteries. This addiction requires large-scale production of livestock which drastically reduces the need for small-scale farmers, making it more and more difficult for the family farm to survive. Community economies suffer and the environment takes a thrashing. Boyle searches out the positive though and in 2011 she attended the first National Conference to End Factory Farming. She found herself with vegans, meat-eaters, vegetarians and those in-between, and felt the event was "a statement of hope" [and] that "it's just a matter of time before we develop food systems that are more sustainable and compassionate."

Boyle has a PhD in neuroscience and a background in psychology, journalism and teaching. She is a passionate communicator, has facilitated community discussions, and spoken at

numerous conferences on food issues. She explains that industrial livestock production consumes vast quantities of arable land and creates globally warming clouds of methane gas, as well as contaminating fresh water sources with a glut of manure, ultimately contributing to health problems. Human obesity and heart disease are attributed to heavy meat consumption, and other health issues such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad cow disease, could be seriously reduced and more easily regulated if we cut back on meat production.

Boyle feels eating less meat but of a higher quality is key--"quality" ideally being organic meat raised and slaughtered ethically on a small scale. We may pay more in the short term for organic meat, but gain in the long run by consuming less fat and no antibiotics. And by exercising smart meat choices we contribute to the livelihood of local producers—those who draw from the best farming practices of the past to sustain the future.

High Steaks: Why and How to Eat Less Meat guides us in taking back our power. "More and more people are committing to healthier eating and choosing local and organic foods that are good for the environment and their communities," Boyle writes. She cites civil and women's rights as movements that have shifted social norms incalculably—proof that people can be powerful instruments of change.

Says David Suzuki of *High Steaks*: It reconnects our fragmented view to reveal the ecological, social, health and economic costs of a diet rich in meat. This is a vital book for all concerned about the perilous state of our planet and anxious for ways to live that are healthy for ourselves and the biosphere."