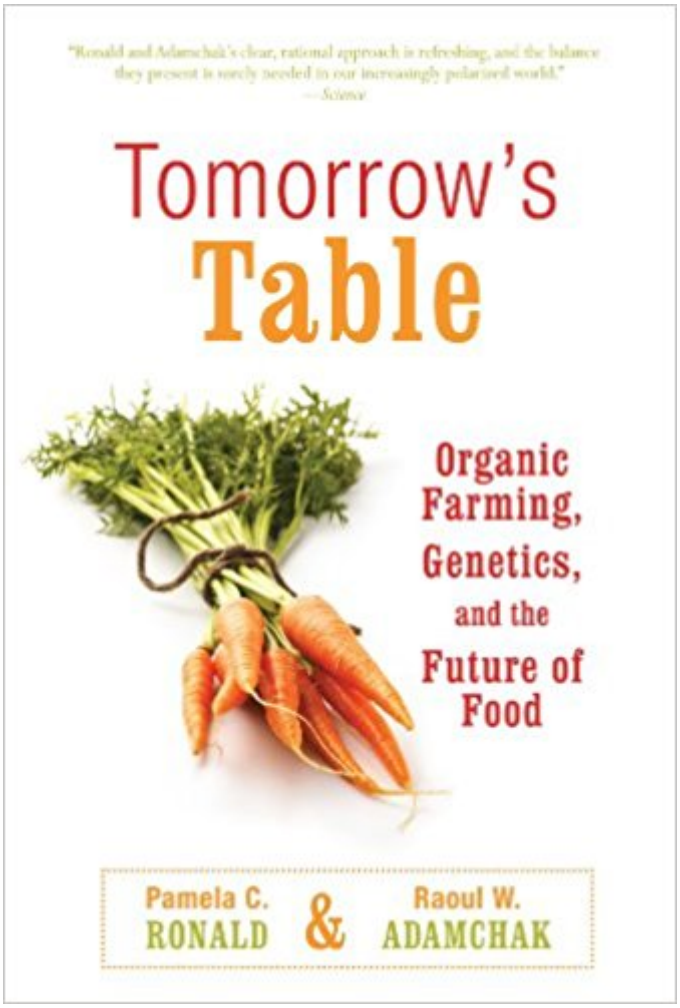
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Tomorrow's Table: Organic Farming, Genetics, And The Future Of Food



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Synopsis

By the year 2050, Earth's population will double. If we continue with current farming practices, vast amounts of wilderness will be lost, millions of birds and billions of insects will die, and the public will lose billions of dollars as a consequence of environmental degradation. Clearly, there must be a better way to meet the need for increased food production. Written as part memoir, part instruction, and part contemplation, Tomorrow's Table argues that a judicious blend of two important strands of agriculture--genetic engineering and organic farming--is key to helping feed the world's growing population in an ecologically balanced manner. Pamela Ronald, a geneticist, and her husband, Raoul Adamchak, an organic farmer, take the reader inside their lives for roughly a year, allowing us to look over their shoulders so that we can see what geneticists and organic farmers actually do. The reader sees the problems that farmers face, trying to provide larger yields without resorting to expensive or environmentally hazardous chemicals, a problem that will loom larger and larger as the century progresses. They learn how organic farmers and geneticists address these problems. This book is for consumers, farmers, and policy decision makers who want to make food choices and policy that will support ecologically responsible farming practices. It is also for anyone who wants accurate information about organic farming, genetic engineering, and their potential impacts on human health and the environment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s population projected to grow someÃ Â 50 percent by midcentury, rigorous

agricultural planning becomes indispensable to forestall the onset of ecological and human disaster. Ronald and Adamchak, a wife-husband team from the University of California at Davis, combine the training and insights of a geneticist and the know-how of a committed organic farmer. They examine the often-passionate debate about genetically engineered food and how it may affect the food supply of the future, meticulously dissecting arguments for and against such application of science. This wildly eccentric book juxtaposes deep scientific analysis of genetically engineered agriculture with recipes for such homey kitchen staples as cornbread and chocolate chip cookies. In a marvelously useful table, they outline a history of biological technology from 4000 BC through the dawn of the twenty-first century. A glossary of agricultural genetics and an extensive bibliography supplement the text. --Mark Knoblauch --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"The authors are eminently qualified to present authoritative descriptions of their respective disciplines, which they do in a readable and accurate manner. But the noteworthy aspect of the book is the way they then marry their separate fields to argue logically for the use of GM technologies to improve organic agriculture. Ronald and Adamchak’s clear, rational approach is refreshing, and the balance they present is sorely needed in our increasingly polarized world." --Science Magazine"One of the best, most balanced accounts of transgenic agriculture that I have read." -- David McElroy, Nature Biotechnology"This is an important book Tomorrow’s Table is a real education on the many choices farmers today must make regarding seeds. It’s very good in explaining genetically engineered seed, how it’s used today (mostly to help plants fight off insects and tolerate herbicide) and how it will be used in the future (to increase disease resistance, drought tolerance, vitamin content and crop yields, for example). The book separates out clearly the issues of how to make sure new seeds are safe, how to price them and how to treat them as intellectual property. I gained an understanding of the history of organic farming and learned about some of the very clever ways organic farmers control pests. Compared with conventional agriculture, many organic techniques can be more cost effective for poor farmers. I agree with the authors that we will need the best ideas from "organic" thinkers and from scientists - including genetic engineers - to feed the world and help the poorest." --Bill Gates"We found the book insightful and well-documented." --Organic Gardening Magazine"They are leading a chorus of young scientists and forward thinkers who see genetic modification not as a threat to sustainable farming but as a new way to make it better...[Ronald and Adamchak] are true believers." --Forbes"This book is a tale of two marriages. The first is that of Raoul and Pam, the authors, and is a tale of the passions of an organic farmer and a plant genetic scientist. The second is the potential marriage of two

technologies--organic agriculture and genetic engineering...Like all good marriages, both include shared values, lively tensions, and reinvigorating complementarities. [The authors] share a strong sense of both the wonder of the natural world and how, if treated with respect and carefully managed, it can remain a source of inspiration and provision of our daily needs." --Sir Gordon Conway KCMG FRS, Professor of International Development, Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College, London, and past President of the Rockefeller Foundation, from his foreword"Here's a persuasive case that, far from contradictory, the merging of genetic engineering and organic farming offers our best shot at truly sustainable agriculture. I've seen no better introduction to the ground truth of genetically engineered crops and the promising directions this 'appropriate technology' is heading." --Stewart Brand, creator of the Whole Earth Catalog"Whether you ultimately agree with it or not, Tomorrow's Table brings a fresh approach to the debate over transgenic crops."--Michael Pollan, author of In Defense of Food and The Omnivore's Dilemma"Welcome as water in the desert--at a time when partisans compete to see who can deliver the hardest slam against those who think differently, what a welcome surprise to find this book building bridges between unnecessary antagonists. The developers of crops improved through biotechnology and the practitioners of organic agriculture want the same thing-a way to grow food that helps farmers tread more gently on the land. Ronald and Adamchak explain how simpatico these two approaches are at heart. For a future that will bring unprecedented challenges we will need all the tools we can muster. Tomorrow's Table shows how organic and biotech can coexist and complement one another. Bravo, and bring on Volume II." --L. Val Giddings, President, PrometheusAB"A unique, personal perspective on the ways in which genetically enhanced crops can improve wholesome agricultural productivity, helping to achieve the low chemical inputs that are the goal of organic agriculture and of those who care about our environment and health. Highly recommended." --Peter H. Raven, President, Missouri Botanical Garden"This wildly eccentric book juxtaposes deep scientific analysis of genetically engineered agriculture with recipes for such homey kitchen staples as cornbread and chocolate chip cookies." --Booklist

This should be read by everyone opposed to gmos who considers her/himself informed on environmental issues. Ronald and to a lesser extent her husband describe the benefits of gmos for small, often poor farmers and for our air, soil and water. In our bifurcated culture, it is very hard to be an environmenalist fully aware of the dangers of global warming as well as the benefits of gmos. Both Ronald and her husband who is the coauthor are organic gardeners/farmers and so provide a very different perspective from what we are accustomed to. The book is by no means an

endorsement of the factory seed production and farming (and in the case of Monsanto, herbicide use) promulgated by giant corporations.

Good primer for the public to understand the many complex issues of the need for feeding the world while minimizing damage to the environment and biodiversity, and the role that genetic engineering of crops can play. The book also makes a case for organic farming and that genetic engineering can actually help improve organic farming by contributing to increased yields, drought tolerance for reducing water consumption and improving nutritional value that would be especially important for the more impoverished areas of the world.

As a long time fan of organic farming and GMO opponent, this book opened my eyes to see the trade offs of all manner of farming. It’s just not a one-size-fits all proposition. Well balanced information without fear-mongering and mania of some in deeply entrenched positions.

Awesome book about the marriage of organic farming and biotechnology toward the goals of sustainable and secure agriculture. As a scientist, Ronald’s book is a welcome relief from the fear mongering anti-GMO agenda. Ronald demonstrates that organic practices and biotechnology both have a place at tomorrow’s table.

great read. well written argument for GE foods and plants. Loved the way they wove in the personal stories and pulled the whole story together. I used it for a research paper. It provided a lot of great examples of how GE foods can help feed a hungry world, Also enjoyed the link with the organic side of the argument. you hear so much about organic and GE foods being at odds, but this book shows they could work together.

Overall an interesting book with some good information. The recipes seem a little out of place. I would have preferred more of a discussion on the topic at hand, but as it is I believe the book presents good information in support of GE and organic practices and touches nicely on some of the problems facing both types of agricultural cultivation.

A great read. Gives insight to food, where it comes from and why Genetics are such an important part of it... even in the organic world.

Good information. Balanced perspectives. The device of using two voices helped to describe a "table" that most thoughtful readers could agree to.

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