Food Ethics Horse Meat Fair Trade and Fast Food

Posted on June 22, 2023

Many people are becoming vegan as the thought of consuming an animal is appalling for them. Others believe that it is fine to consume meat as it is rich in protein; however, there is a line that no one wants to cross, and that is eating horse meat. Interestingly, some European countries do not share this sentiment as they consume horse meat. In 2006, Congress officially forbade horse slaughter in the United States. This meant that any horse that was to be killed was transported from the United States to either Canada or Mexico. Ninety per cent of the meat from these horses would end up in pet food, while the rest of it would be transported to Europe. The problem arose when Ireland's Food Safety Authority tested 27 samples of burgers, and 10 of those samples contained 29 per cent of the horse DNA. This was a clear violation of health and nutrition safety guidelines as horse meat is not a globally consumed meat, and if it is being used, then the consumer needs to be informed. This was not the case for the burgers made in Ireland. It threw the rest of Europe in a frenzy as global health and safety were being violated, which would have had dire consequences for Europe as, in parts of it, horse meat is illegal, so there were also some criminal repercussions to this situation (Nestle, 2013).

Sinister Coffee Beans

Over the years, fair trade was introduced to source organic raw materials from third-world countries in an ethical way. Many companies proudly express that they are part of fair trade and their product are ethical. However, Starbucks, a world-renowned coffee chain, was caught in an investigation for using child labour. These children were younger than thirteen years old and worked more than 40 hours per week on the coffee farms in Guatemala. The same plantations supply coffee beans to Nestle, a company that has been sued many times due to unethical practices. The children who worked on these farms were paid according to the weight of the beans they picked. Some of these children were earning less than 31 pence per hour. Nespresso was linked to seven farms that used child labour, and Starbucks was linked to five farms. According to a human rights lawyer, these children were working in an unsafe environment and were exposed to danger on a daily basis. Fairtrade was established to protect against such abuse of labour and to have ethical sourcing of all the material. However, these two companies violated International labour regulations by sourcing from farms that used child labour. It is extremely unfortunate that these giant companies are not following ethical laws and are feeding their greed by any means possible. If these companies do not change their approach, then the customers will slowly pull away as people become more socially aware. They only support ethical companies and can no longer be manipulated by flashy advertisements (Doward, 2020).

The Not So Fair Trade

Fairtrade was established so that the farmers of third-world companies would benefit from trading with developed countries by selling their goods at a raised value. This would benefit them as they would be selling at a high profit, which was still affordable for developed countries. However, it has been observed that fair trade does not work for cocoa, coffee, tea, etc. The reason is that the fair trade certification is so expensive that, in the end, all the farmers are left with less profit than the conventional farmers. On top of that, the administration process is also very costly and takes a huge amount from the profit margin. This cut of the profit does not affect bigger suppliers, and the certification may cost them a fraction of the profit, but for smaller suppliers, this can be devastating. If this is supposed to be fair trade, then the certification and administrative process should not be so expensive, especially for smaller traders. The smaller suppliers should not have to pay the same amount for FT certification as bigger suppliers; it should be less for them so that the fair trade proves profitable for the smaller suppliers; otherwise, there is no point in having the fair trade program. There is already concern regarding unethical coffee and cocoa trade outside of fair trade, but if fair trade also fails, then there will be nothing that will protect smaller suppliers from being exploited (Sylla, 2014).

Fast Foods – The Nutrition less Husks

The biggest concern of any health agency is to provide healthy and nutritional food to the people, as access to healthy food is a basic human right. However, the big fast food companies seem to ignore this fact by providing an unhealthy menu of deep-fried food, which has led to increased obesity in the United States, and everyone has seemed to close their eyes on this. Nutrition scientists have published research paper after research papers proving the short-term and long-term damage these foods are doing to consumers, but these fast-food chains seem to be going nowhere. Fortunately, the younger generation is becoming more and more concerned about their health, and although some of them are making questionable choices, most of them are trying to look for healthier choices (Walker, 2015).

References

Doward, J. (2020, March 1). Children as young as eight picked coffee beans on farms supplying Starbucks. The Observer.

Nestle, M. (2013, February 19). The horsemeat scandal-an object lesson in food politics. Food Politics by Marion Nestle.

Sylla, N. S. (2014). The Fair Trade Scandal. The Independent Institute.

Walker, J. (2015, April 15). Fast-food giant struggles to keep customers. DW.COM.