



# **FOOD & OUR RESILIENCE**

**by Peppe Mastruzzo**

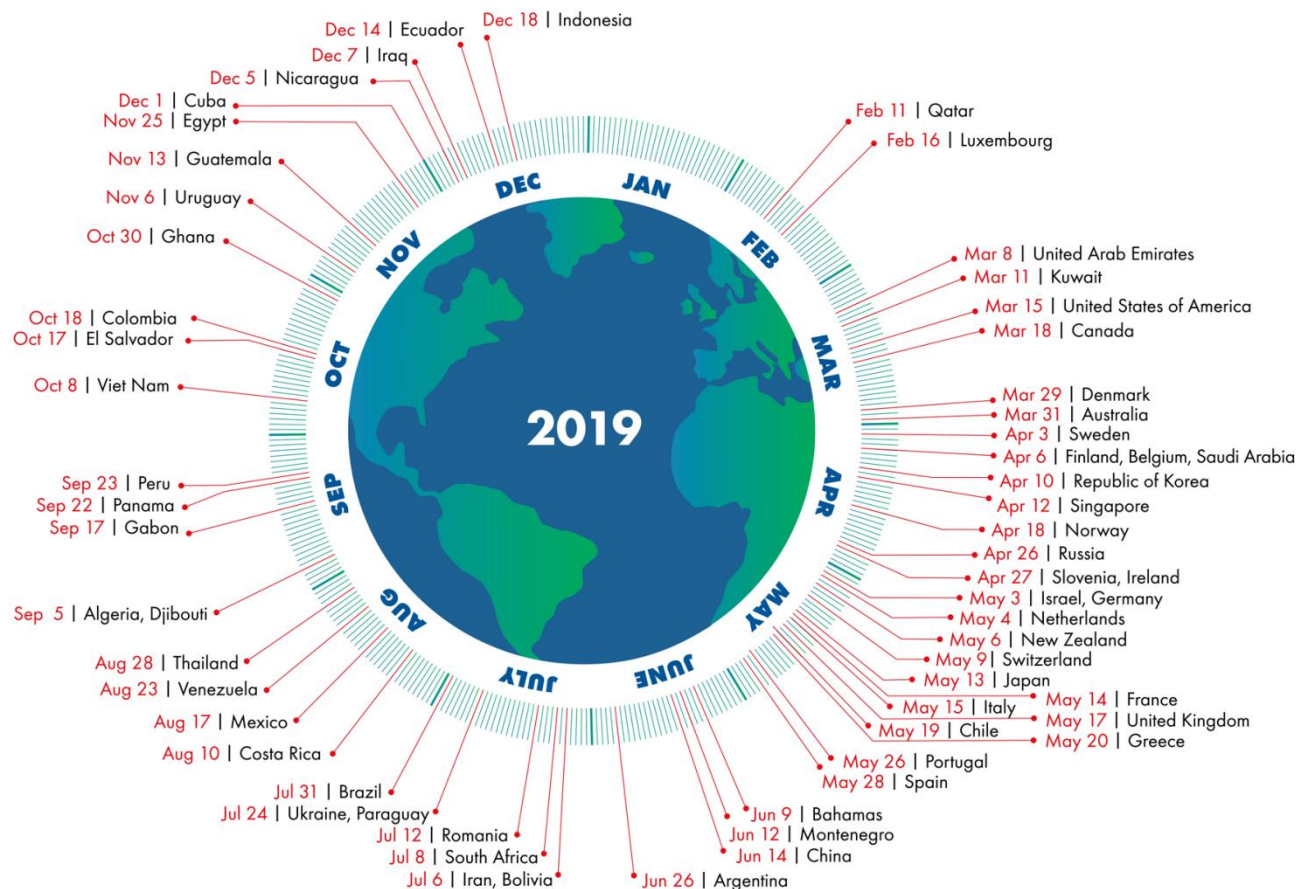
**VILLARCEAUX – JULY 2019**

# overshoot day

- Earth Overshoot Day marks the date in the year when we have used more resources from nature than ecosystems can regenerate
- this year we are using 1.7 Earths; through overfishing, overharvesting, and polluting more than Earth can absorb, in 2019 Earth Overshoot Day comes today, on July 29<sup>th</sup>

# Country Overshoot Days 2019

When would Earth Overshoot Day land if the world's population lived like...



Source: Global Footprint Network National Footprint Accounts 2019



# the ethos of homo oeconomicus



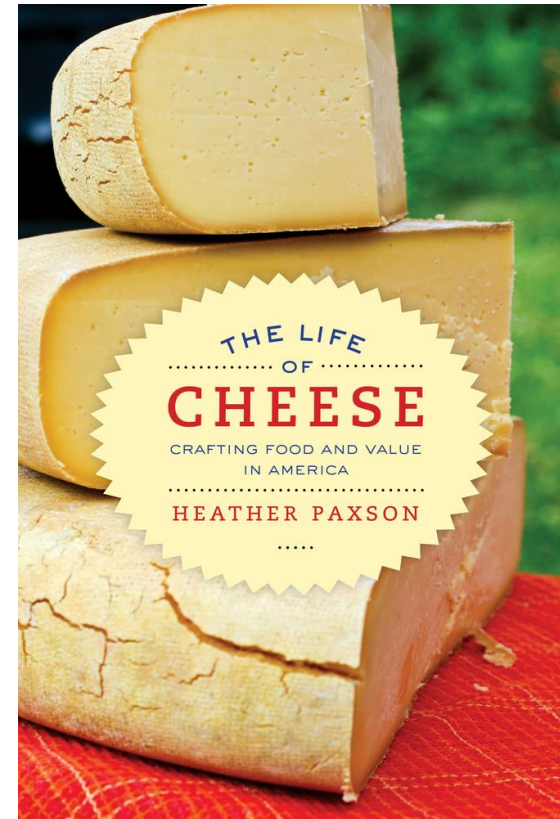
economic activity is  
separate from moral  
values

individuals naturally and  
rationally seek to  
maximize **profit**

this jungle attitude &  
maximizing behaviour  
eventually increases the  
welfare of the community

# values, communities, and unfinished commodities

artisanal food is an  
“unfinished commodity”  
as defined by Heather  
Paxson, Professor at MIT,  
in her book *The Life of  
Cheese: Crafting Food and  
Value in America*





# food as a private good



- food is part of a complex balance between agriculture, environment, health and culture
- on the contrary, markets regard food as a mere product (food as a private good makes hunger still triumph in a world of lavishness)



# WHY IS IT?

# from China to the Amazons



- 800 million pigs slaughtered yearly
- 8 million hectares of soy monoculture
- 80 million tons of Amazon soy to produce Chinese pork



# the locust corporation



- financial powers jump to follow soy and pigs
- in 2008, Goldman Sachs diverts assets from derivatives to food chains, buying 25% of Shuanghui, which in 2013 buys Smithfield Foods, the world largest pig and pork producer

# finance and hunger



- in 2008, the price of all 25 main raw materials increased at the same time; while usually some prices rise and others fall, this increase in unison is unique in history
- no particular natural event took place in 2008: no floods or droughts that triggered that increase in the price of rice or wheat
- the cause was the huge mass of capital fleeing from the subprime mortgage collapse

# today finance is an end in itself



- the role of finance as serving the economy is lost, and finance today means making money out of money quickly
- hence the gigantism of financial markets: in 1990 Wall Street was as big as **35%** of US GDP; before the crisis in 2006 it exceeded **350%**
- i.e.: there is a hypertrophic mass of purely speculative transactions whose expected profits largely exceed real production profits

# casino-finance & catastrophe



instability is the essence of casino finance, not just a side effect: speculators buy just to make prices go up and then sell at a higher price – the greater and quicker the increase, the more they will gain; the greater the disaster, the more lucrative the game

**hunger!**



since there are no rules on speculating against food prices (and hunger!) the food market, naturally subject to price fluctuations, becomes an ideal hunting ground



# the Wall Street bull



- financial speculation has disastrous effects on the worldwide production of agro-goods
- a rational and fair production of food is a general concern to be protected by international law against private transnational interests

# the little bull (torèt)

today:

785 million lack proper access to drinking water

(WHO & UNICEF, *Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene* – Updated on June 14, 2019)

Over 820 million are chronically undernourished

(FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, July 2019)



# the Villarceaux bull



Considering also moderate levels of food insecurity, over 2 billion people do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food, including 8% of the population in Northern America and Europe.

Hunger is on the rise in almost all African sub-regions, making Africa the region with the highest undernourishment, at almost 20%.

Hunger is also slowly rising in Latin America and the Caribbean (almost 7%).

In Asia, Western Asia shows a continuous increase since 2010 (more than 12%).

# the ethos of the commons



- the “commons” are spaces, services and goods functional to the protection both of basic individual rights and vital public interests
- they are crucial for the free development of the individual as a human being

# global commons



- some commons go beyond a local perspective to reach a global dimension:
- natural commons such as great water reserves, a clean environment, climate stability, biodiversity, and the ozone shield
- human-made commons like transnational infrastructures (the internet)
- global policy objectives like peace, security, sustainability, monetary and financial stability



# Pacha Mama: a common world

global commons are  
essential for a fair and  
“regenerative” world;  
they satisfy the need of  
the present generation  
without foreclosing options  
for the future ones;  
yet, they are underprovided  
due to the lack of national  
and international regulation



# a world of commons

- great migrations of capital, goods and people challenge the distinction between national and international issues
- issues like labour exploitation, inequality, food scarcity, and climate change enlarge beyond state borders the duties of nations, making them transnational
- global commons should be enjoyed in an inclusive and non-rival way, while their situation is critical for depletion & lack of legal safeguards

# food as a human right



food is a basic human right crucial for peace and security, humanitarian assistance, innovative sources of financing for development, monetary and financial stability

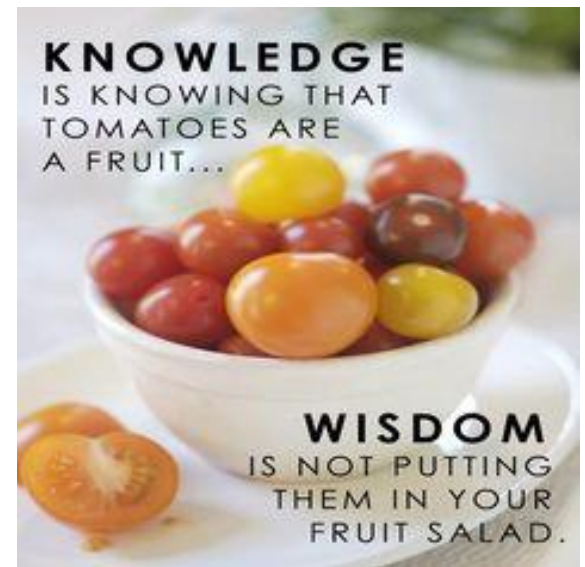
UN (2003), *Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development, Final text*

UN (2008), *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development*

# food as global knowledge

food produces various utilities  
both as a cultural good and as a  
material good generated by  
(agri)cultural techniques

a shared knowledge about food  
production and preparation  
that guarantees the ecological  
cycle of life is a global commons



# the city as a commons

- citizens collectively produce different kinds of values and can decide which of them will remain commons and which will be turn into a commodity, e.g. language, ideas, art, products.
- can we make food into a commons resource?





# Francis & food



“There is a great variety of small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world’s peoples, using a modest amount of land and producing less waste. Economies of scale end up forcing smallholders to sell their land or to abandon their traditional crops.” (Laudato Si’, 129)

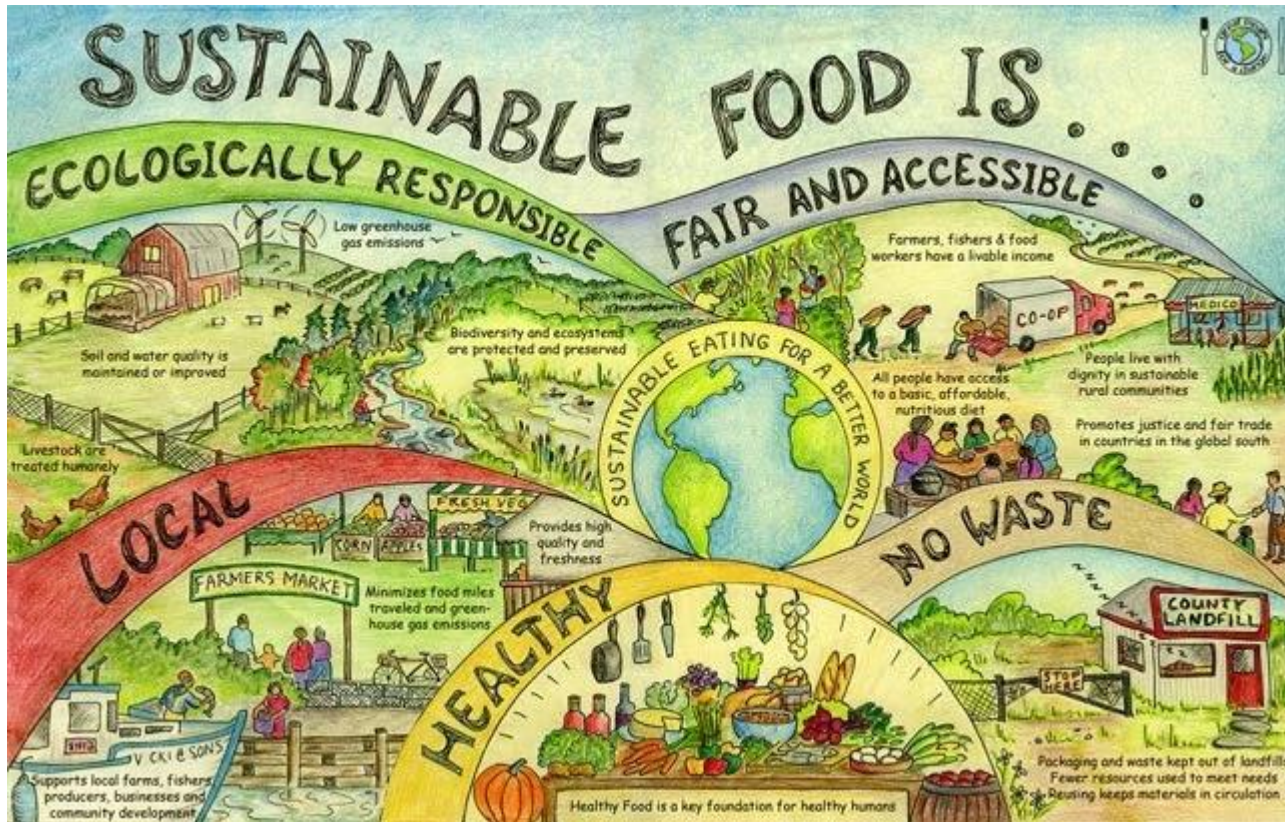
# a local future



- local diets can be a basis for a regenerative policy on agriculture and food
- they protect local products and labour
- they promote the knowledge of the local environment and the culture of the territory, and provide the basis for their collective protection

# Terra Madre

“A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress. Frequently, in fact, people’s quality of life actually diminishes – by the deterioration of the environment, the low quality of food or the depletion of resources – in the midst of economic growth, and talk of sustainable growth usually becomes a way of distracting attention and offering excuses, absorbing the language and values of ecology into the categories of finance and technocracy.” (Laudato Si’, 194)



**thank you!**