

A Mormon Ethic of Food

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In his book *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, Michael Pollan identifies major problems caused by the recently emergent food industry and the negative effects they have on the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the environments. Pollan’s observations mirror those of American poet-prophet Wendell Berry. Both highlight losses associated with the demise of independent, small-farm agricultures. Here, I suggest that the Mormon ethic of food in its ideal (if not lived) form beautifully, simply, and powerfully restores what is lost.

At the heart of the industrial food system is a forgetting: a forgetting of the natural food cycle, a forgetting of where our food *should* come from, a forgetting of food without “additives and residues.”¹

We ignore the cruelty animals suffer on factory farms and that they are given neither space to roam nor appropriate foods to eat. Instead, they, like us, are pumped full of corn, hormones, and medication.² Of this, Pollan states, “Were the walls of our meat industry to become transparent, literally or even figuratively, we would not long continue to raise, kill, and eat animals the way we do.”³

We forget the hidden costs of big-industry food and the losses suffered by those who live downstream from industrialized food factories and mono-culture farms whose waterways have been polluted.⁴ We forget the hundreds, even thousands, of miles our food travels from farms to markets before it reaches our tables.⁵

We sometimes forget that the United States government subsidizes corn, rice, and soy to the tune of approximately 1.28 billion dollars per year and that that is one part of why high-fructose corn syrup and soy oils are added to food items that have no business containing them.⁶ This is why Pollan calls some of the resulting products “edible foodlike substances” rather than “food.”⁷ Explicating this reality, he writes, “Very simply, we subsidize high-fructose corn syrup in this country, but not carrots. While the surgeon general is raising alarms over the epidemic of obesity, the president is signing farm bills designed to keep the river of cheap corn flowing, guaranteeing that the cheapest calories in the supermarket will continue to be the unhealthiest.”⁸

We forget the costs of poor health and other ills because the price we pay at the counter is artificially low. “The ninety-nine-cent price of a fast-food hamburger simply doesn’t account for that meal’s true cost—to soil, oil, public health, the public purse, etc.—costs that are never charged directly to the consumer but, indirectly and invisibly, to the taxpayer (in the form of subsidies), the health care system (in the form of foodborne illnesses and obesity), and the environment (in the form of pollution).”⁹

We forget that there are four distinct seasons and that for centuries different foods were associated with their own unique growing periods. Fruits, vegetables, herbs, and even animals have their own natural seasons.¹⁰ We forget that there are wise purposes for this, purposes that fit our bodies and the land. Instead, we have been trained to eat the fruits, vegetables, herbs, and animals we want to eat when we want to eat them, regardless of the region we live in or the time of year.

We forget something broader still and that is the interconnectivity between the food we eat and the earth we live on. Indeed, “What is most troubling, and sad, about industrial eating” for Pollan “is how thoroughly it obscures all these relationships and connections.”¹¹

“To go from the chicken (*Gallus gallus*) to the Chicken McNugget is to leave this world in a journey of forgetting that could hardly be more costly, not only in terms of the animal’s pain but in our pleasure, too. But forgetting, or not knowing in the first place, is

what the industrial food chain is all about, for if we could see what lies on the far side of the increasingly high walls of our industrial agriculture, we would surely change the way we eat.”¹² Wendell Berry agrees, for “[t]he industrial eater is . . . one who does not know that eating is an agricultural act, who no longer knows or imagines the connections between eating and the land.”¹³ Such eaters “are suffering a kind of cultural amnesia that is misleading and dangerous.”¹⁴

With such changes, we are prone to forget the “pleasure of eating,” the relationship between our bodies and the food we eat—and the way we eat that food.¹⁵ Americans often eat alone, standing up, or in our cars, while Europeans more frequently dine together, slowly, sitting down. Berry summarizes:

[I]ndustrial eating has become a degraded, poor, and paltry thing. Our kitchens and other eating places more and more resemble filling stations, as our homes more and more resemble motels. “Life is not very interesting,” we seem to have decided. “Let its satisfactions be minimal, perfunctory, and fast.” We hurry through our meals to go to work and hurry through our work in order to “recreate” ourselves in the evenings and on weekends and vacations. . . . And all this is carried out in a remarkable obliviousness to the causes and effects, the possibilities and the purposes, of the life of the body in this world.¹⁶

Many busy people have forgotten the joy of cooking meals at home, either with or for the ones they love, and the correspondent joy of sitting around the table in shared conversation and feasting. We often forget to feel gratitude for our food, to say grace.

At the heart of the Mormon food ethic is a remembering, an awareness, and a thankfulness for our food. Among the most important memories re-collected are the deep and abiding connections between the food we eat, the land, our bodies, and other people. Correspondingly, LDS scripture and leaders have espoused a way of life that restores this memory by restoring closeness to the natural life cycle, the soil, the true costs of food production and consumption, and care for animals. It results in greater health and a connectedness that ends in grace, in gratitude.

The earliest foundations for a Mormon food ethic are found in the expanded LDS canon. A commonly quoted scriptural passage from the Doctrine and Covenants reads:

[T]he fulness of the earth is yours, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air . . . Yea, and the herb, and the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards; Yea, all things which come of the earth, *in the season thereof*, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart; Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul. And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, *with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion.*¹⁷

The emphasis is on joy, with the teaching that the many good things that come from the earth are gifts to *bring* joy for the human body and soul. Yes, they are useful, but they have higher ends. They “please the eye” and “gladden the heart.”¹⁸ They nourish and they clothe. They have delicious tastes and smells. They “strengthen” and “enliven.”¹⁹ The giver of these gifts is pleased and seems to hope that we as human beings will be also. The LDS food ethic places us, then, in a *joyful, grateful, full* relation not only to God but to all the living things of the earth, providing a counter to the soulless, hurried subsistence earlier noted by Wendell Berry. This passage hints at other important concepts that are later fleshed out in a subsequent scriptural passage that helps set the foundation for a Mormon food ethic. Notice in particular the lines “in the season thereof,” and “with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion.”²⁰

The subsequent passage is Doctrine and Covenants section 89, which Latter-day Saints know colloquially as the Word of Wisdom. Its first verses explain that it is a “Word of Wisdom,” given “for the benefit of . . . the church, and also the saints in Zion—To be sent greeting; not by commandment or constraint, but by revelation and the word of wisdom.”²¹ These same verses also state very clearly why the revelation was given: “In conse-

quence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you."²² It is not too difficult to consider the subsidization of corn, the cruel nature of factory farms, the hidden costs and contents of our food, the thousands of food miles from our farms to our forks, and the overall forgetting surrounding what we eat as part of these "evils and designs" of "conspiring men" about which we are given warning and regarding which this section offers helpful and healthful advice.²³

Such counsel comes in verses 10 and 11, beginning with a repetition of section 59's phrase "in the season thereof": "And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—Every herb *in the season thereof*, and every fruit *in the season thereof*; all these *to be used with prudence and thanksgiving*."²⁴ Herbs and fruits are among the "good things which come of the earth" that are given to us to be used, to be enjoyed, to be eaten, but at particular times—the time in which nature tells us that they are ready, that they are ripe.²⁵ That time varies by location and climate. That time limits, but it also expands. It opens us up to memory of the earth's cycles, of our own bodies, and of the relationships we once had with our local farmers and communities—relationships we can have again. As one website about eating seasonally states, "There are a number of good reasons to eat more local, seasonal food: to reduce the energy (and associated CO² emissions) needed to grow and transport the food we eat, to avoid paying a premium for food that is scarcer or has travelled a long way, to support the local economy, to reconnect with nature's cycles and the passing of time, but, most importantly, because seasonal food is fresher and so tends to be tastier and more nutritious."²⁶

In many different ways, Mother Earth gives us what our bodies need when we need it: for example, citrus fruits in cold and flu season. There is immense wisdom in accepting what—and when—she offers.²⁷ Eating seasonally used to be the way everyone naturally ate. Our ancestors had no presumptions that they should be able to eat peaches year-round unless they did the hard work of preserving them themselves. There are parts of Europe where

it is still this way to some degree. A recent NPR story entitled “In Germany, Seasonal Eating as Way of Life—And Excuse to Celebrate” begins, “You know it’s springtime in Germany when eager shoppers ransack the produce aisle of the local supermarket. In April, it’s the rhubarb, in May, it’s the peaches and in June, it’s the cherries. These fruits only put in a brief appearance while they are in season; the rest of the year, you have to rely on their canned or frozen equivalent.”²⁸ The seasonal nature of food ties the community together through both a collective looking forward toward the future and a collective appreciation of the present. That immense gratitude borne of brief seasons inspired celebratory festivals for specific fruits or vegetables, akin to Utah’s Strawberry, Peach, and Onion Days. This story elucidates how the wise words “Every herb *in the season thereof*, and every fruit *in the season thereof*” lead directly to the next, “all these *to be used with prudence and thanksgiving*.”²⁹

The idea of thanksgiving shows up again in subsequent verses of the same section: “Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless *they are to be used sparingly*; And it is pleasing unto me that *they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine*. . . . And these hath God made for the use of man *only in times of famine and excess of hunger*.”³⁰ There is a sense that this gratitude is a humble acknowledgment of one’s place in the world and an understanding and indebtedness that another being’s death offers us renewed life. With this exists a corresponding revelation that animal lives matter. Twentieth-century LDS president Joseph F. Smith agreed. He asked, “What is it to be humane to the beasts of the fields and birds of the air?” before answering, “It is more than to be considerate of the animal life entrusted to our care. It is a grateful appreciation of God’s creations. It is the lesson of divine love. To Him all life is a sacred creation for the use of His children. Do we stand beside Him in our tender regard for life?”³¹ Smith also stated, “The dominion the Lord gave man over the brute creation has been, to a very large extent, used selfishly, thoughtlessly, cruelly.”³² His predecessor, Brigham Young, recommended “that all men attend to their

flocks and herds with carefulness; and see that no creature in their charge is hungry, thirsty, or cold.”³³ Together their words, crying from the dust, offer a profound critique of factory farm practices.

What do we make of the word “sparingly”? LDS philosophy professor, Chris Foster, suggests that “sparingly” can mean “in great moderation” or “in a sparing or saving manner.”³⁴ The Word of Wisdom, therefore, may be expressing a concern for animal life as well as for our health. An article published in the *Times and Seasons* while Joseph Smith was prophet addressed this issue: “Let men attend to these instructions, let them use the things ordained of God; let them be sparing of the life of animals.”³⁵ Foster also applies Doctrine and Covenants 59’s line “with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion” to our eating (and treatment) of animals: “The mistreatment of animals on today’s factory farms could easily be referred to as ‘extortion.’ [Definition: obtaining something by means of threats, force, fraud, or wrong use of authority.]”³⁶

Doctrine and Covenants section 89 continues: “All grain is ordained for the use of man . . . to be the staff of life. . . . All grain is good for the food of man; as also the fruit of the vine; that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground.”³⁷ Ezra Taft Benson in a general conference address invited “every family” to “have on hand grain for at least a year.”³⁸ He also reminded them that “it generally takes several times as much land to produce a given amount of food when grains are fed to livestock and we consume the meat. Let us be careful not to overdo beef cattle and other livestock projects on our . . . farms.”³⁹

Moreover, LDS leaders have long encouraged their stewards to become their *own* farmer producers as well as consumers by growing gardens. One hundred and fifty-five years ago, Brigham Young counseled, “Progress, and improve upon and make beautiful everything around you. Cultivate the earth, and cultivate your minds. Build cities, adorn your habitations, make gardens, orchards, and vineyards, and render the earth so pleasant that when you look upon your labors you may do so with pleasure,”⁴⁰ reminiscent of Doctrine and Covenants 59’s ode to joy and human bodily and spiritual purposes. Another leader, J. Reuben Clark

Jr., carried this call into the beginning of the next century, albeit more succinctly: “Let every man who has a garden spot, garden it; every man who owns a farm, farm it.”⁴¹ Thirty-nine years after that, President Spencer W. Kimball repeated Clark’s concise words before adding his own: “We encourage you to grow all the food that you feasibly can on your own property. Berry bushes, grapevines, fruit trees—plant them if your climate is right for their growth. Grow vegetables and eat them from your own yard. Even those residing in apartments or condominiums can generally grow a little food in pots and planters. . . . If there are children in your home, involve them in the process with assigned responsibilities.”⁴²

Kimball offered this same support again and again, mentioning it in nearly two dozen semi-annual conference addresses, championing the growing of personal, family, and community gardens. Many Latter-day Saints responded to the invitation with faithful action. Kimball exclaimed, “From all directions we hear of gardens which have made an outstanding contribution.”⁴³ Of the “numerous gardens,” many “are found in hanging baskets, in containers on stairways, on trellises, and in window boxes,” emphasizing that the size of one’s garden plot does not matter.⁴⁴ The tiniest growing space is enough to help one remember both the costs and the care that bring a seed to life and then sustain it. Similarly, even the smallest gardens are sufficient to help one feel a greater measure of thankfulness for the food on one’s table and in one’s belly. They, too, can tie an individual more tightly to the earth and to the human family. Michael Pollan seems to concur. In his book *Food Rules: An Eater’s Manual*, he suggests Rule 62: “Plant a vegetable garden if you have the space, a window box if you don’t.”⁴⁵

It is important simply to be near the earth. On one occasion, Ezra Taft Benson stated that “[t]here are blessings in being close to the soil.”⁴⁶ On another, Kimball rejoiced that so “many . . . have followed the counsel to have their own gardens wherever it is possible so that we do not lose contact with the soil and so that we can have the security of being able to provide at least some of our food and necessities.”⁴⁷ Modern science confirms the importance of keeping contact with the soil in some surprising and remarkable

ways.⁴⁸ University of Bristol physiology professor, Dr. Christopher Lowry, found that touching dirt changes one's brain chemistry for the better. Anna North summarizes his research: "He says that bacteria like this [in soil] could one day help treat diseases involving inflammation—and that inflammation is associated not just with physical ills but also with psychiatric ones like PTSD and major depression."⁴⁹

In addition to applauding a more intimate, material connection with the earth, Kimball also gave great weight to understanding the earth's cycles as well as enhancing the relationships that form between humans engaged in joint labor.

I hope that we understand that, while having a garden . . . is often useful in reducing food costs and making available delicious fresh fruits and vegetables, it does much more than this. Who can gauge the value of that special chat between daughter and Dad as they weed or water the garden? How do we evaluate the good that comes from the obvious lessons of planting, cultivating, and the eternal law of the harvest? And how do we measure the family togetherness and cooperating that must accompany successful canning? Yes, we are laying up resources in store, but perhaps the greater good is contained in the lessons of life we learn.⁵⁰

Pollan identifies many of the same good fruits: "What does growing some of your own food have to do with repairing your relationship to food and eating? Everything. To take part in the intricate and endlessly interesting processes of providing for your sustenance is the surest way to escape the culture of fast food and the values implicit in it: that food should be fast, cheap, and easy; that food is a product of industry, not nature; that food is fuel rather than a form of communion with other people, and also with other species—with nature."⁵¹

President Kimball enjoyed sharing the gardening success stories that were sent to him. One such story came from two families in Frankfurt, Germany, who shared a garden plot. They initially had difficulty finding land in their city but ultimately succeeded. Still, after their springtime planting, "the neighbours told us that it would not grow," the German families wrote.⁵² The intrepid

gardeners then reported, “Every kind of vegetable came. It is so wonderful to see the plants grow. We take turns now to go to our garden and water our plants. We are happy to have a garden.”⁵³ From another story in São Paulo: “This [is] a way of making lasting relationships of friends and neighbors. Our gardens are a matter of discussion in private, in socials at home. It has brought our families together.”⁵⁴

Former LDS leader Barbara W. Winder related that her “newly married daughter” and son-in-law “began a series of moves from one place to another—graduate school, first job, and so on.”⁵⁵ In each new place, with each new “climate and soil conditions” (as well as new knowledge and skills), they grew a garden, with ascending levels of success.⁵⁶ As children came, they also learned to help and work together. “Now their gardens are . . . worthwhile . . . projects, as the family enjoys and,” crucially, “*shares* the produce.”⁵⁷ Such willingness to share with others is a genuine mark of gratitude and quiet acknowledgment of one’s own temporal blessings. It is also an intentional act of loving (and remembering) one’s neighbor. This willingness to share is reflected in an anecdote told recently at Weber State University by Kate Holbrook, a specialist in both Mormon women’s history and Mormon foodways: “When I first told one [of] my friends that I was going to study the Mormon ways of eating she said, ‘You know what? Mormon food habits is giving food away.’”⁵⁸

Holbrook’s friend is right. Mormons share food—at births and deaths and many life events in-between. That, too, is part of the Mormon food ethic, integrated seamlessly with the entirety of remembering, care, responsibility, connectedness, and gratitude. I have experienced it myself. When I gave birth to my daughter in Brooklyn, New York, one of the first people to visit me was a woman with three small children whose husband worked from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day in an effort to pay their New York City rent and student loan bills. Despite her own challenges, she came to bring me food. Two of the next people to bring me food were dear friends who were waiting for what would be their unsuccessful IVF results. I felt the deep care and sacrifice from each of them. Another time, another Mormon woman brought

my family homemade bread and soup the day my first book was due at the publisher's. The simple, healthful food buoyed my body and my spirits.

Implementing the Mormon food ethic of eating fruits and herbs in their season, eating meat sparingly and with great gratitude, growing some of our own food, and sharing with others, restores memory and fulfills what Michael Pollan only imagines in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*:

Imagine if we had a food system that actually produced wholesome food. Imagine if it produced that food in a way that restored the land. Imagine if we could eat every meal knowing these few simple things: What it is we're eating. Where it came from. How it found its way to our table. And what it really cost. If that was the reality, then every meal would have the potential to be a perfect meal. We would not need to go hunting for our connection to our food and the web of life that produces it. We would no longer need any reminding that we eat by the grace of nature, not industry, and that what we're eating is never anything more or less than the body of the world. . . . [W]e can . . . make and get our food so that it . . . feeds our bodies and our souls. Imagine it: Every meal would connect us to the joy of living and the wonder of nature. Every meal would be like saying grace.⁵⁹

Notes

1. Wendell Berry, "The Pleasures of Eating," in *What Are People For?: Essays* (Berkeley, Calif.: Counterpoint, 1990), 145–52.

2. "What gets a steer from 80 to 1,100 pounds in fourteen months is tremendous quantities of corn, protein and fat supplements, and an arsenal of new drugs" (Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* [New York: Penguin, 2006], 71).

3. *Ibid.*, 333.

4. One nonprofit organization, the Natural Resources Defense Council, explains, "People who live near or work at factory farms breathe in hundreds of gases, which are formed as manure decomposes. The stench can be unbearable, but worse still, the gases contain many harmful chemicals. . . . Animal waste

also contaminates drinking water supplies. For example, nitrates often seep from lagoons and sprayfields into groundwater. Drinking water contaminated with nitrates can increase the risk of blue baby syndrome, which can cause deaths in infants. High levels of nitrates in drinking water near hog factories have also been linked to spontaneous abortions. Several disease outbreaks related to drinking water have been traced to bacteria and viruses from waste” (“Pollution from Giant Livestock Farms Threatens Public Health,” Natural Resources Defense Council, last modified February 21, 2013, <http://www.nrdc.org/water/pollution/nspills.asp>).

5. The most common number thrown around is 1,500 miles, as in this statement from Melina Shannon-DiPietro of Yale Sustainable Food Program (formerly Project): “Most food travels 1,500 miles before we eat it” (Anne Underwood, “American Campuses Get Greener Than Ever,” *Newsweek*, August 15, 2007, <http://www.newsweek.com/american-campuses-get-greener-ever-99123>). *Slate*’s Jane Black looked into this number and discovered that it is most fitting for those living in the U.S. Midwest but that it still doesn’t track food coming from overseas: “Pirog tallied that produce arriving in Chicago from within the United States traveled 1,518 miles. But even if you live in the Windy City, that doesn’t account for milk or meat, which make up a significant part of American diets. Nor does it account for kiwis from Italy, apples from New Zealand, or grapes from Chile. This, despite the fact that imports make up a growing percentage—15 percent of U.S. food in 2005—of what ends up on our tables.” Further, “Researchers have done little work to calculate food miles for areas outside the Midwest. A 1997 study showed that produce travels an average of 1,129 miles to Austin, 34 percent fewer than to Chicago. In 2001, an analysis of the Jessup, Md., terminal market concluded that U.S.-grown produce traveled an average of more than 1,685 miles. And though there’s no formal research to support it, Pirog says it’s safe to assume that, on average, food travels fewer miles to get to diners in California than to those in New York” (“What’s In a Number?: How the Press Got the Idea that Food Travels 1,500 Miles from Farm to Plate,” *Slate*, September 17, 2008, http://www.slate.com/articles/life/food/2008/09/whats_in_a_number.html).

6. Eric Pianin, “How Billions in Tax Dollars Subsidize the Junk Food Industry,” *Business Insider*, July 25, 2012, <http://www.businessinsider.com/billions-in-tax-dollars-subsidize-the-junk-food-industry-2012-7>.

7. “[Y]ou’re better off eating whole fresh foods rather than processed food products. That’s what I mean by the recommendation to ‘eat food,’ which is not quite as simple as it sounds. For while it used to be that food was all you *could* eat, today there are thousands of other edible foodlike substances in the

supermarket” (Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto* [New York: Penguin, 2008], 1).

8. Pollan, *Omnivore’s Dilemma*, 108.

9. *Ibid.*, 200.

10. “Feeding animals corn in CAFOs has accustomed us to a year-round supply of fresh meats, many of which we forget were once eaten as seasonally as tomatoes or sweet corn: People would eat most of their beef and pork in late fall or winter, when the animals were fat, and eat chicken in the summer” (*ibid.*, 253).

11. *Ibid.*, 10.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Berry, “Pleasures of Eating,” 146.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, 147.

17. Doctrine and Covenants 59:16–20, emphasis added.

18. Doctrine and Covenants 59:18.

19. Doctrine and Covenants 59:19.

20. Doctrine and Covenants 59:18, 20.

21. Doctrine and Covenants 89:1–2.

22. Doctrine and Covenants 89:4.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Doctrine and Covenants 59:18; Doctrine and Covenants 89:10–11, emphasis added.

25. Doctrine and Covenants 59:17. It was pointed out to me that the Spanish translation here refers not to a time or period but to taste and deliciousness. Rather than posing a problem, this highlights even more forcefully that fruits and vegetables taste more delicious when they can spend the appropriate time in soil and sunlight and when they do not have to be picked too early to survive long journeys in trucks and stays in grocery stores.

26. Nick Gitsham, “Why Eat the Seasons?,” *Eat The Seasons*, accessed September 12, 2015, <http://www.eattheseasons.co.uk/why.php>.

27. This in turn reminds me of mother’s milk, which also changes based on the needs of the recipient.

28. Esme Nicholson, "In Germany, Seasonal Eating as Way of Life—and Excuse to Celebrate," *National Public Radio*, June 22, 2015, www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/06/22/415833782/in-germany-seasonal-eating-as-way-of-life-and-excuse-to-celebrate.

29. Doctrine and Covenants 89:11; emphasis added.

30. Doctrine and Covenants 89:12–13, 15; Joseph Smith similarly said, "I exhorted the brethren not to kill a serpent, bird, or an animal of any kind during our journey unless it became necessary in order to preserve ourselves from hunger" (*History of the Church*, 2:71).

31. Joseph F. Smith, "Humane Day," *Juvenile Instructor* 53 (April 1918): 182–83.

32. Joseph F. Smith, "Kindness to Animals," *Juvenile Instructor* 47 (February 1912): 78.

33. Brigham Young, "Territory of Utah Proclamation for a Day of Praise and Thanksgiving," *Deseret News*, vol. 2, no. 4, December 27, 1851, 15. Republished as "Proclamation: For a Day of Praise and Thanksgiving for the Territory of Utah," *Ensign*, November 1971, 40. Available at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/desnews1/id/171459/rec/14> and <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/11/proclamation-for-a-day-of-praise-and-thanksgiving-for-the-territory-of-utah?lang=eng>.

34. Chris Foster, "Mormonism and Animal Rights: Harmony or Contradiction?" (presentation at Utah Valley University, August 2011). Hugh Nibley seems to agree: "Meat sparingly. Again, sparing is a good word. It means 'sparing God[']s creatures.' It is to be used with thanksgiving and not with gluttony" ("The Word of Wisdom: A Commentary on D&C 89," Manavu Ward Gospel Doctrine Class, December 1979, <http://publications.maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1044&index=1>).

35. Joseph Smith, "Word of Wisdom," *Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, no. 15, June 1, 1842, 801.

36. Christopher Foster, "Mormonism and Animal Rights." Available at <http://www.slideshare.net/Fosterch5/mormonism-and-animal-ethics>.

37. Doctrine and Covenants 89:14, 16.

38. Ezra Taft Benson, "Prepare Ye," October 1973, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1973/10/prepare-ye?lang=eng>.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Brigham Young, "Remarks by President Brigham Young, Ogden City, June 12, 1860," *Deseret News*, vol. 10, no. 23, August 8, 1860, 177.

41. Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1937 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), 26.

42. Spencer W. Kimball, "Family Preparedness," April 1976, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1976/04/family-preparedness?lang=eng>.

43. Spencer W. Kimball, "A Report and a Challenge," October 1976, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1976/10/a-report-and-a-challenge?lang=eng>.

44. Ibid.

45. Michael Pollan, *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 135. Several of Pollan's other rules fit neatly within the Mormon food ethic. This is remarkable not because the same solutions are offered but because the groundwork for the Mormon ethic of food was in place more than 180 years ago, during a time when the majority of people grew some of their own food and ate fruit and herbs in their season and animals in winter and times of famine.

46. Benson, "Prepare Ye."

47. Spencer W. Kimball, "The True Way of Life and Salvation," April 1978, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1978/04/the-true-way-of-life-and-salvation?lang=eng>.

48. Surprising, that is, for anyone who is not already a gardener. Many know personally the lift to one's mood that comes from spending time in the soil.

49. Anna North, "The Secret to Happiness Can be Found by Digging in the Dirt," *New York Times*, August 31, 2014, <http://op-talk.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/08/31/the-secret-to-happiness-can-be-found-by-digging-in-the-dirt>.

50. Kimball, "Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action," October 1977, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1977/10/welfare-services-the-gospel-in-action?lang=eng>.

51. Pollan, *Food Rules*, 135–37.

52. Kimball, "A Report and a Challenge."

53. Ibid.

54. Kimball, "The Lord Expects His Saints to Follow the Commandments," April 1977, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1977/04/the-lord-expects-his-saints-to-follow-the-commandments?lang=eng>.

55. Barbara W. Winder, “Draw Near Unto Me through Obedience,” October 1985, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1985/10/draw-near-unto-me-through-obedience?lang=eng>.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.; emphasis added.

58. Kate Holbrook, quoted in Ingrid Maldonado, “Exploring Mormon Ethics of Eating,” Weber State University, *Signpost*, March 24, 2015, <http://www.wsusignpost.com/2015/03/24/exploring-mormon-ethics-of-eating>.

59. Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat, Young Readers Edition* (New York: Penguin, 2009). I offer a comparative citation from the original edition: “But imagine for a moment if we once again knew, strictly as a matter of course, these few unremarkable things: What it is we’re eating. Where it came from. How it found its way to our table. And what, in a true accounting, it really cost. We could then talk about some other things at dinner. For we would no longer need any reminding that however we choose to feed ourselves, we eat by the grace of nature, not industry, and what we’re eating is never anything more or less than the body of the world” (411).