

One day two years ago, as I was walking around the University of Chicago campus, I happened to see a flyer advertising something called the *T. Kimball Brooker Prize for Undergraduate Book Collecting*. Curious, I did some research online and decided to apply for the prize as a second year student. At the time, my book “collection” was nothing more than an unintended side effect of my propensity to buy interesting-looking books. While I had a sizable number of volumes that were thematically related to one another, there was nothing truly deliberate about the collection itself. Much to my pleasant surprise, my “accidental” collection (unimaginatively titled *Agriculture and Food*) received an honorable mention.

Since participating in the 2010 T. Kimball Brooker Prize competition, my entire approach to book buying has changed. What was once a haphazard ritual of impulse shopping at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore has become a measured process of weighing each decision, hunting for the right book, and fleshing out gaps in my collection. My shopping has shifted from retail bookstores like Barnes and Noble to much more interesting booksellers like Powell’s Books in Hyde Park. For instance, I plan trips to Powell’s weeks in advance to make the most of special sale days. While there, I stock up on used or out-of-print books that I can’t find anywhere else. While I still enjoy shopping for more recently published books at the Seminary Co-op or Barnes and Noble, nothing can replace stores like Powell’s, O’Gara and Wilson, or other used and rare book stores for the substance of my current collection.

Today, my collection is both much larger and much better defined than it was two years ago. I have titled it *Food for Thought: the History, Economics, and Politics of Agriculture*. With this title, I hope to indicate both the breadth and internal thematic cohesion of my collection. Agriculture is clearly a massive topic that crosses many academic disciplines, from biology to anthropology to economics. One might easily be tempted to approach the subject from a single, fundamental, biological perspective. However, we can only ever successfully understand agriculture within a larger historical, economic, and political human context. After all, the only differences between agriculture and mere “plant life” in a generic, biological sense are the anthropogenic and highly social practices of cultivation, distribution, and consumption found in agricultural systems throughout the world. In short, human actions and behaviors are what make agriculture worth studying.

I am an economist by training and therefore tend to begin thinking about agriculture from an economic perspective. Any discussion of agricultural economics should really start with Thomas Malthus’ *Essay on Population*, originally published in 1826. In this seminal work, Malthus set up the fundamental struggle between human population growth and agricultural production that would drive much of the research in agriculture over the subsequent 180 years. When I found a beautiful 1996 copy of this work in Powell’s Bookstore, I snapped it up. During the same visit, I also found a 1977 copy of Ester Boserup’s 1965 classic: *Conditions of Agricultural Growth*. In this book, Boserup provided the first significant repudiation of Malthus’ dire predictions of inevitable widespread famine by arguing that human ingenuity and innovation were capable of thwarting the pressures of ever-increasing population. These two volumes anchor the rest of my collection as part of a long and vibrant academic dialog about the fundamental forces behind agriculture.

In addition to situating my collection within a historical progression of agricultural thought, I also have incorporated several books with ties to the University of Chicago. While relatively few people now remember, a small cohort of famous agricultural economists taught at the University of Chicago during the 1960s and 1970s. Among them were D. Gale Johnson,

George Tolley, and Nobel laureate Theodore Schultz. I have hunted down several books either written or edited by some of these prolific figures, as well as a book written by current Professor and Nobel laureate Robert Fogel. In my own small way, I hope that studying these scholars and collecting their works will help secure the continued legacy of agricultural economics at the University of Chicago for the future.

The rest of my collection is comprised of a wide range of books. I have included very historical texts (Buck, 1920; Gold, 1949; Kirk, 1933; Mead and Ostrolenk, 1928) as well as very recent and popular books (Pollan, 2006; Thurow and Kilman, 2009; Hewitt, 2010). Many books are academic while others are intended for wider audiences. I even found an old high school debate handbook about the McNary-Haugen Farm Surplus Bill (Rankin, 1927). I have tried to ensure that my collection displays enough variety to provide a truly robust introduction into thought about agriculture focusing on historical, economic, and political perspectives.

As I mentioned earlier, my book collection has only been a proper, deliberate collection for a few short years. In truth, I have owned practically every book in my bibliography for less than five years, making me a relative newcomer to the book-collecting scene. However, I do not plan on stopping anytime soon. I have really learned to love the activity for its own merits; scouring bookshelves to find the perfect next addition is something that never ceases to excite me. In the future, I hope to continue expanding my growing collection even as I leave the University of Chicago to pursue the next chapter in my life. There are so many new bookstores to explore and hidden treasures to find! In particular, I am always looking for early editions of classics in the field such as early copies of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the works of Norman Borlaug and Earl Butz, and books about the famous Russian botanist and geneticist Nikolai Vavilov.

Book collecting is something that I have incorporated into my life and will carry with me for years to come – probably forever. In no small part, I have to credit the T. Kimball Brooker Prize and my experience with it two years ago for giving me the initial push into this world of collecting. In truth, I see book collecting as a natural extension of the essential University of Chicago quest for knowledge and enriched life; it has certainly enriched mine.

Crescat litteris, vita excolatur.

**Food for Thought:
the History, Economics, and Politics of Agriculture**

Anderson, J. L. *Industrializing the Corn Belt: Agriculture, Technology and Environment, 1945-1972*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

Anthony, Constance G. *Mechanization and Maize: Agriculture and the Politics of Technology Transfer in East Africa*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

Bassett, Thomas J., and Alex Winter-Nelson. *The Atlas of World Hunger*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

Blaxter, Kenneth, and Noel Robertson. *From Dearth to Plenty: The modern revolution in food production*. 1995. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. [First digitally printed paperback edition in good condition.]

Boserup, Ester. *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change under Population Pressure*. 1965. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1977. [Seventh printing hardcover in fair condition.]

Boserup's *Conditions of Agricultural Growth* is a classic in the field of agricultural economics. In it, Boserup presents one of the first major alternatives to the Malthusian view that population pressure will eventually outpace agricultural production, leading to inevitable famine. In particular, she argues that agricultural intensification and technical innovation have in large part kept up with population growth over history.

Bové, José, and François Dufour. *The World Is Not For Sale: Farmers Against Junk Food*. 2000. Trans. Anna de Casparis. London: Verso, 2002. [First English paperback edition in fair condition.]

Bray, Francesca. *The Rice Economies: Technology & Development in Asian Societies*. 1986. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. [First paperback edition in good condition.]

Brookfield, Harold. *Exploring Agrodiversity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. [First edition paperback in excellent condition.]

Bruegel, Martin. *Farm, Shop, Landing: The Rise of a Market Society in the Hudson Valley, 1780-1860*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002. [First edition hardcover in excellent condition.]

Buck, Solon J. *The Agrarian Crusade: A Chronicle of the Farmer in Politics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1920. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

Caird, James. *The Landed Interest and the Supply of Food*. 5th ed. New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1967. [First printing hardcover in good condition.]

Clarke, Sally H. *Regulation and the revolution in United States farm productivity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

Crabb, A. Richard. *The Hybrid-Corn Makers: Prophets of Plenty*. 1947. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1948. [Hardcover second printing in excellent condition.]

Cronon, William. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. 1991. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1992. [First paperback edition in good, well-read condition.]

Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis* (a history of the city of Chicago) was one of the books that initially got me interested in the field of agricultural economics. His chapter about the grain trade in nineteenth century Chicago remains one of my all time favorites.

Curwen, Cecil E., and Gudmund Hatt. *Plough and Pasture: The Early History of Farming*. 1953. New York: Collier Books, 1961. [First paperback edition, good condition.]

Davis, John H., and Ray A. Goldberg. *A Concept of Agribusiness*. Boston, MA: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1957. [Hardcover first edition folio in excellent condition.]

Federico, Giovanni. *Feeding the World: An Economic History of Agriculture, 1800-2000*. 2005. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009. [First paperback edition in excellent condition.]

Fogel, Robert William. *The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-2100: Europe, America, and the Third World*. 2004. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. [Third printing paperback in good condition.]

Robert Fogel is one of several authors in this bibliography with ties to the University of Chicago. This Nobel laureate in economics currently teaches at the Booth School of Business and studies population economics. This book addresses the historical and economic connections between nutrition (rooted in agriculture) and human health outcomes.

Gill, Gerard J. *Seasonality and Agriculture in the Developing World: A Problem of the Poor and Powerless*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

- Gold, Bela. *Wartime Economic Planning in Agriculture: A Study in the Allocation of Resources*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1949. [Hardcover first edition in good condition.]
- Grigg, David, B. *Population Growth and Agrarian Change: An historical perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. [Hardcover first edition in fair condition.]
- Harley, Richard M. *Breakthroughs on Hunger: A Journalist's Encounter with Global Change*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]
- Hewitt, Ben. *The Town That Food Saved: How One Community Found Vitality in Local Food*. 2010. New York: Rodale, 2011. [First printing paperback edition in excellent condition.]
- Hillman, Jimmye S. *Nontariff Agricultural Trade Barriers*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

This book has a forward written by D. Gale Johnson – a former professor at the University of Chicago. Johnson was a distinguished agricultural economist who served not only as a Professor, but also as Chairman of the Economics Department, Dean of the Social Sciences Division, and Provost of the University. The University of Chicago Economics Department currently hosts an annual D. Gale Johnson Lecture in his honor.

- Hubbard, Michael. *Agricultural Exports and Economic Growth: A Study of the Botswana Beef Industry*. London: KPI Limited, 1986. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]
- Kahn, Barbara E., and Leigh McAlister. *Grocery Revolution: The New Focus on the Consumer*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997. [First edition paperback in poor condition.]
- Kiple, Kenneth F. *A Moveable Feast: Ten Millennia of Food Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]
- Kirk, John H. *Agriculture and the Trade Cycle: Their Mutual Relations with Special Reference to the Period 1926-1931*. 1933. Clifton, NJ: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1972. [First hardcover reprint edition in excellent condition.]
- Kotler, Neil G., ed. *Sharing Innovation: Global Perspectives on Food, Agriculture, and Rural Development*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990. [First edition paperback in excellent condition.]
- Malthus, Thomas Robert. *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, 6th ed. 2 vols. 1826. London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1996. [First hardcover reprint in excellent condition.]

Malthus' *Essay on Population* is widely considered to be the first major work in agricultural economics and the impetus for much subsequent study. Indeed,

Malthusian arguments (that population pressure will inevitably outstrip agricultural productivity and result in widespread famine) have been made consistently over the last two centuries and persist today. In a way, all of agricultural economics is merely a response to Malthus.

Mann, Harold H. *The Social Framework of Agriculture: India, Middle East, England*. New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1967. [Hardcover first edition in good condition.]

Manning, Richard. *Against the Grain: How Agriculture has Hijacked Civilization*. 2004. New York: North Point Press, 2005. [First paperback printing in excellent condition.]

Marcus, Alan I. *Agricultural Science and the Quest for Legitimacy: Farmers, Agricultural Colleges, and Experiment Stations, 1870-1890*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1985. [Hardcover first edition in good condition.]

McMahon, Joseph A. *The WTO Agreement on Agriculture: A Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

McWilliams, James E. *Just Food: Where Locavores Get It Wrong and How We Can Truly Eat Responsibly*. 2009. New York: Back Bay Books, 2010. [First paperback edition in excellent condition.]

Mead, Edward Sherwood, and Bernhard Ostrolenk. *Harvey Baum: A Study of the Agricultural Revolution*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1928. [Hardcover first edition in fair condition.]

Morgan, Dan. *Merchants of Grain*. 1979. New York: Penguin Books, 1983. [Fourth paperback printing in good condition.]

Morton, Oliver. *Eating the Sun: How Plants Power the Planet*. 2007. New York: Harper Perennial, 2009. [First American paperback edition in excellent condition.]

Murray, Sarah. *Moveable Feasts: From Ancient Rome to the 21st Century, The Incredible Journeys of the Food We Eat*. 2007. New York: Picador, 2008. [First paperback edition in fair condition.]

Neely, Wayne Caldwell. *The Agricultural Fair*. 1935. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967. [Hardcover first reprint edition in excellent condition.]

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities Through Time*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993. [First edition paperback in excellent condition.]

Patel, Raj. *Stuffed & Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*. 2007. New York: Melville House Publishing, 2008. [First paperback edition in excellent condition.]

- Perfecto, Ivette, John Vandermeer, and Angus Wright. *Nature's Matrix: Linking Agriculture, Conservation and Food Sovereignty*. 2009. London: Earthscan, 2010. [Second printing paperback in excellent condition.]
- Perren, Richard. *Agriculture in depression, 1870-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]
- Peterson, Trudy Huskamp. *Agricultural Exports, Farm Income, and the Eisenhower Administration*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]
- Pollan, Michael. *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World*. 2001. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2002. [First paperback edition in good, well-read condition.]
- . *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual*. New York: Penguin Group, 2009. [First edition paperback in excellent condition.]
- . *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. 2008. New York: Penguin Group, 2009. [First paperback edition in good, well-read condition.]
- . *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. 2006. New York: Penguin Group, 2007. [First paperback edition in good, well-read condition.]
- Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* – a widely read and recently published popular book – was one of the first texts to spark my interest in issues of food, agriculture, and their larger economic systems. Pollan is particularly gifted at explaining the current food system and drawing attention to its faults.**
- Pryor, Frederic L. *Economic Systems of Foraging, Agricultural, and Industrial Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]
- Rankin, E. R. "The McNary-Haugen Farm Surplus Bill: Debate Handbook." *University of North Carolina Extension Bulletin* 7:6 (November 16, 1927): 1-109. [Hardcover-bound first printing bulletin in good condition.]
- Roberts, Paul. *The End of Food*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]
- Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. 2001. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005. [First Harper Perennial paperback edition in excellent condition.]

Schultz, Theodore W., ed. *Distortions of Agricultural Incentives*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978. [Hardcover first edition in good condition.]

Theodore W. Schultz, a former professor at the University of Chicago, was the 1979 Nobel laureate in economics for his work in agricultural economics. Schultz, along with such colleagues as D. Gale Johnson (former Provost) and George Tolley (current Professor Emeritus) made the University of Chicago a temporary powerhouse for agricultural economics. Both Schultz and Johnson authored chapters in this volume.

Serreau, Coline. *Solutions locales pour un désordre global*. Paris: Actes Sud, 2010. [First edition paperback in excellent condition. French.]

Shannon, Fred A. *The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897*. 1945. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968. [First paperback reprint in good condition.]

Shiva, Vandana, ed. *Manifestos on the Future of Food & Seed*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2007. [First edition paperback in excellent condition.]

Shiva, Vandana. *Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2008. [First edition paperback in excellent condition.]

———. *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000. [First edition paperback in excellent condition.]

Smil, Vaclav. *Feeding the World: A Challenge for the Twenty-First Century*. 2000. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001. [First paperback edition in good condition.]

Stakman, E. C., Richard Bradfield, and Paul C. Mangelsdorf. *Campaigns against Hunger*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967. [Hardcover first edition in good condition.]

Thurow, Roger, and Scott Kilman. *Enough: Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2009. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition. **Signed and dedicated by Roger Thurow at the University of Chicago on March 2, 2010.**]

Timmer, C. Peter, ed. *The Corn Economy of Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

Timmer, C. Peter. *Getting Prices Right: The Scope and Limits of Agricultural Price Policy*. 1986. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988. [Second printing paperback in excellent condition.]

Tuma, Elias H. *Twenty-Six Centuries of Agrarian Reform: A Comparative Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965. [Hardcover first edition in excellent condition.]

Warley, T. K., ed. *Agricultural Producers and Their Markets*. New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1967. [Hardcover first edition in good condition.]

Wright, Angus. *The Death of Ramón González: The Modern Agricultural Dilemma*. Rev. ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005. [First printing paperback in good, well-read condition.]