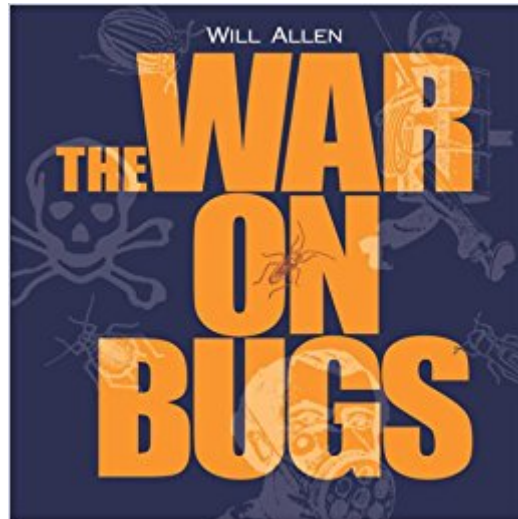




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# The War On Bugs



## Synopsis

Will Allen is an organic farming visionary. A true activist, entrepreneur, and expert, he understands the complexities of farming first hand and the impact that commercialization has had. In the early nineteenth century as the American population grew rapidly, demands on crop output increased. Seeing an opportunity to play upon fears from market demand, chemical companies declared war on the vile, profit-sucking, output-wreaking, arch-nemesis of the average American farmer - bugs. With precision, pesticide manufacturers delivered a "shock and awe" media campaign, that can only be paralleled to the current blitzkrieg from today's pharmaceutical companies. Bugs were the threat to the American dream - and there was a cure available to every farmer available in spray, granule, dust, or systemic form that could be applied to your crops. Will Allen's War on Bugs reveals how advertisers, editors, scientists, large scale farmers, government agencies, and even Dr. Seuss, colluded to convince farmers to use deadly chemicals, hormones, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in an effort to pad their wallets and control the American farm enterprise. Utilizing dozens of original advertisements and promotions to illustrate the story, Allen details how consumers and activists have struggled against toxic food. Echoing the warnings of seminal works on the topic like, *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, *100,000 Guinea Pigs* by Arthur Kallet and F.J. Schlink, and *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, *The War on Bugs* shouts that the time to stop poisoning our food, water, air, and ourselves is now!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In 1984, when the gas leak from Union Carbide's pesticide plant in Bhopal killed thousands, I asked myself why agriculture had become like war. In the War on Bugs, Will Allen tells us why. Whether you care about the bugs, or the food you grow or eat, this is a book you must read. It will help us all move from violent agriculture to a non-violent agriculture which protects all life and our health."--Dr. Vandana Shiva, director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy and author of Stolen Harvest

"Will Allen exposes how at every turn the government and the chemical industry steered us toward synthetic and poisonous solutions to the challenges of farming, drawing upon a unique combination of scientific knowledge about their devastating effects on the environment and a rich understanding of the organic approach--from doing it, as a farmer, in the fields."--Mark Schapiro, editorial director of the Center for Investigative Reporting and author, Exposed

"I have often wondered why independent-minded farmers follow the recommendations of chemical and GMO seed salesmen. Will Allen takes us through the history of chemical agriculture in the US, tracing the collusion among chemical companies, university researchers and the media to convince farmers that chemicals are 'progressive,' and absolutely necessary to the success of their farms."--Elizabeth Henderson, author, Sharing the Harvest

"Because of Will Allen, and other organic farmers and advocates like him, we now can choose to eat foods without industrial chemicals, wear clothes made from cotton grown without pesticides, and look again at farms--at least the organic ones--as places of natural harmony, not as industrial wastelands. In The War on Bugs, Allen documents how chemical weapons manufacturers, among others, convinced farmers to spray their toxic wastes on our soil, devastating our land and our health. You won't believe what they didn't teach you in school. The produce aisle will never look the same to you again."--John Passacantando, Executive Director, Greenpeace USA

"In classical Indian music the lineage and intellectual approach of master and disciples is known as a gharana. Rachel Carson's 100th anniversary provoked an enormous attack on her from the pesticide-reactionary complex, shamelessly misrepresenting both her work and its consequences, and quite literally calling her a mass murderer responsible for the resurgence of malaria. Will Allen is a worthy student of Carson's gharana, and in telling the history of earlier such assaults from the pesticide complex, he shows us that her spirit and art are alive, well--and still badly needed."--Carl Pope, Executive Director, Sierra Club

"The War on Bugs is must reading for organic consumers and every concerned citizen. Will Allen tells us the incredible story, in clear but rousing language, of how corporations, out-of-control scientists, and indentured government have carried out a literal 100 Year War against organic and sustainable agriculture and family farms, and provides inspiration for the organic food and farming revolution which is already underway."--Ronnie Cummins, National

Director, Organic Consumers Association Culture, Agriculture, Food and Environment- "This book is useful and important to anthropologists not because of the answers that it gives but because of the questions that it asks and the answers it suggests that we need to find. Allen's work asks us to dig deeper into the history of the small family farmer and to understand in detail the process by which the image imposed on American farming by agribusiness came to dominate public consciousness. Allen's ambitiousness in writing this book has brought broad and related themes into view that converge in the historical processes and public consciousness surrounding chemical farming in the United States. It is a highly useful book for under-graduate classes and for scholars seeking to develop new ideas and critical perspectives on the history of current issues in agriculture."

Will Allen grew up on a small farm in southern California and served in the Marine Corps between the Korean and Vietnam wars. He received a PhD in Anthropology (focused on Peruvian tropical forest agriculture) and taught at U-Ill and UC-Santa Barbara before being fired and jailed for a year for civil rights and antiwar activism. He returned to farming and farm labor full-time in 1972 and has been farming organically ever since, in Oregon, California, and Vermont, where he now co-manages Cedar Circle Farm ([www.cedarcirclefarm.org](http://www.cedarcirclefarm.org)). He founded the Sustainable Cotton Project and is a board member of the Organic Consumers Association, Rural Vermont, and is a co-chair of Farms Not Arms.

This book is more relevant today with the growing numbers of debacles Monsanto is wrestling with as a result of agricultural pests becoming ever more immune to its increasingly toxic chemicals. The fact that California's Prop 37 was defeated is an indication of the public's ignorance to the facts. Will Allen explains just how the public is deceived into ignorance and he does it the most succinct and elegant manner. He explains how things got to be the way they are and describes how they could be. We do not know what impact GMO will have yet and being that the universities and our government are so heavily influenced by the Big Chem companies it may be too late by the time we do. This book could also be classified under Horror, but what is really horrible is not taking action to stop it. (Ever wonder why there are so many kinds of cancer and so many getting it these days? Funny how the chemical companies make us sick and then charge exorbitant prices for the medicines designed to make us better - whether they work or not.) Read this book and pass it on, for the sake of the future.

Wow! The War on Bugs is everything a person should know about how we got hoodwinked into using dangerous chemicals in every aspect of our environment. It's eyeopening and a reality to who really owns our Earth. Everyone should know about how marketing ploys are are convincing us to ruin nature and our health. A definite must read!

Farming is a important component of the world economy and it ranks as the most important in terms of human survival. Food is vital to the continuance of any species and with multiple billions of individuals inhabiting the planet, the volume of food needed to sustain the population is staggering. In order to protect crops and better ensure that food continues to be produced in massive quantities, chemical companies and government collaborators have created all sorts of chemical compounds to eliminate insects and the use/misuse of these chemicals and other questionable practices forms the basis of this book, the War on Bugs, a book written by a man who has extensive experience in organic farming and is concerned that the chemicals intended to kill bugs are much too toxic and could pose a threat to humans. Growing large amounts of food is much more challenging then it was in the past. It is also more critical, since there are far fewer farmers producing much larger volumes of food then at any point in history. In order to facilitate this transformation from small, family farmer to large, mega- farm, chemical compounds were created to help fend off insects and other pests. Many of these compounds are potentially very harmful, but big businesses continue to manufacture these compounds and sell them to farmers for direct use on crops. To make matters worse, governments are often co- conspirators; encouraging the use of these poisons to control insects while completely ignoring the long- term impact on the health of the citizens. Pesticides are one of the main items discussed in this book, but they are only one part of the problem. There is also the issue of growth hormones used in cattle and other livestock, as well as genetically modified organisms to improve crop and livestock yields and thus increase profits. Governments have, for the most part, turned a blind eye to these practices. The use of such artificial and potentially dangerous means to increase profits is well- established and health experts of different stripes have come forward and issued harsh warnings about their long- term effects on humans. But governments have joined forces with big business and erred on the side of practicality. These chemicals and modifications to foods could very well have harmful side effects, but government officials feel they are important to the production of mass quantities of food and thus they have decided to ignore the problem or pretend that no problem exists. Chemical and other businesses have utilized many different tools to hook farmers on the supposed necessity of these potentially dangerous means to improve crop yields and this book details many of them, from the deceptive advertisements to scare

tactics intended to convince farmers that they will be headed toward bankruptcy if they do not accept these chemicals and other modifications into their business. The repercussions of these activities have not yet been fully realized, but the author is convinced that humans will pay for these abuses in due time unless we act now and demand that business and governments clean up their act.

Eating Oil: "The War On Bugs" Sounds A "Pharm Alarm" About the Toxic History of American Agriculture  
By Dr. Rob Williams, Vermont Commons editor  
Read more about this book at [...]East Thetford, Vermont's Will Allen of Cedar Circle Farm is no ordinary tiller of the soil. The former marine, jailed for anti-war protests during the Vietnam Era, also possesses a Ph.D. in Anthropology, a long track record as a citizen/activist, and now, a new book brilliantly entitled "The War On Bugs." Allen's story is a remarkable expose, ten years in the making, that highlights the often-sordid relationship among what might be awkwardly termed "corporate agricultural interests," Madison Avenue, and the U.S. Empire's military/industrial complex. Let's collectively call this trio "Big Pharm." As always, history is a useful starting place. In his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, author Jared Diamond coined the term "farmer power" to describe the dramatic increase in land productivity (and economic and political might) that emerged with the Neolithic Revolution in agriculture roughly 10,000 years ago, a series of processes that gave us the very best and worst of human civilization. Allen's analysis in "The War on Bugs" charts the arrival of a second agricultural revolution, which began around the time of the so-called American "Civil War" during the 1860s, when U.S.-based chemical companies declared war on two scourges: bugs of every description, and declining soil fertility. Allen's great strength lies in combining short and pithy analytical vignettes detailing the various tools and tactics used by an evolving "Big Pharm" industry with a cornucopia of visual material. Each chapter features fascinating historical reproductions harvested from a wide range of U.S. media - newspaper articles, old editorials from farm journals, pseudo-scientific testimonials bought and paid for by Big Pharm interests, and, of course, ever-ubiquitous advertisements (including some early head--turning work by Theodore Geisel - a.k.a. Dr. Seuss - who was employed by the chemical industry early in his career to sell Pharm toxins to an unsuspecting U.S. public. Who knew?). What makes Allen's work so vital is his exploration of the historical and cultural intersections among a variety of forces: Madison Avenue media marketing, science, corporate power and, most importantly, the process of "farming" itself, a complex and rigorous activity so full of mistaken mythological holes within the fabric of U.S. history that you can drive a John Deere combine harvester through it. Simply stated,

farming is incredibly hard work, made more so by forces way beyond the control of individual farmers -weather, crop prices, and the price of fuel - to name but three. The great genius of Big Pharm interests, and "The War On Bugs" highlights it, comes with their use of what Allen calls a "four part sales model" to get farmers "hooked" on their products. To wit: beginning in the mid-19th century, Big Pharm editorials in various farm journals planted the seeds of interest in new chemical-intensive products and processes; scientific testimonials by so-called "experts" (often citing studies paid for by Big Pharm interests) watered the seeds; saturation advertising by well-funded marketers nurtured interest even further; and finally, farmer testimonials about "Big Pharm" success helped seal the deal. And, let's be honest about the results. In one sense, oil/chemical based fertilizers and pesticides ushered in a remarkable era in food productivity during these past 150 years. The only reason why today's 21st century planet can afford to carry close to 7 billion human inhabitants is because of the so-called "Green Revolution" in agriculture. Literally, as Dale Allen Pfeiffer states, we in the West "eat oil," as consumers eating in the midst of the most fossil-fuel-intensive agricultural system the world has ever seen. Allen's book makes it clear that we've been "eating oil" for longer than most of us realize, and that the high costs of doing so - from rampant toxin-related illnesses and death; to the chemical poisoning of our air, water, and landscapes; to the centralizing of corporate commercial political and economic power - are worth considering. It would be a mistake to romanticize small-scale subsistence farming. Perhaps more of a mistake, however, is to ignore the history and the trade-offs of Big Pharm's "war on bugs." If ever there was a historical argument for cultivating thoughtful localvore living, food sovereignty, and homestead security moving into the 21st century, this book is it.

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