Michael Pollan’s The Omnivore’s Dilemma, published last year, is as close to an instant classic on the subject of farming and food as we’re likely to see in this decade. The structure is ingenious: Pollan follows a series of food chains from a group of plants photosynthesizing calories, through a series of intermediate stages, and ultimately to a meal. Along the way, he describes with wit and clarity the fundamental tension between the logic of nature and the logic of human industry. The way we eat, he argues, represents our most profound engagement with the natural world, and industrial eating obscures crucially important ecological relationships and connections. To prove it, he spent a week working on Joel Salatin’s farm, visited many other farms, did a lot of eating and a lot of thinking about what he ate.

One of the book’s funniest sections dealt with Whole Foods, where Pollan marveled at the lyrical descriptions on product labels and delivered a few hard, justified knocks at the company for doing much to push the organic food industry toward organic-in-name-only factory farms, mock holistic processed food and the like. At first, Whole Foods reacted like any offended corporation, issuing a release saying, in effect, that Michael Pollan was full of it. Then the story took a surprising turn, leading to an online dialogue between Pollan and Whole Foods founder John Mackey, who turned on a dime at dizzying speed and said the chain would henceforth make a point of buying from local farmers whenever possible.

Although Pollan first hit the radar of many readers with his 2001 book The Botany of Desire: A Plant’s-Eye View of the World and a New York Times Magazine cover story about a steer he bought and tracked to the door of the slaughterhouse, he’s been a working writer since getting his master’s degree at Columbia University in 1981. He wrote two books before Botany and won several journalism prizes. He now lives in Berkeley and teaches at the University of California.
why not prod rather than blow off? And he responded in a similar way. It was very unusual because most corporations, if they were going to respond to criticism, they wouldn’t admit that was what they were doing. They would not have tied their new initiatives to the critic, and Mackey indeed announced several of these initiatives in his letter to me. I thought that was very refreshing and completely surprising — but also very clever because it sends a message that Whole Foods is different from your typical Fortune 500 corporation, that they do engage with critics, that they try by doing so to be on the forefront of what is happening. So in a way I thought it was really smart on his part. It probably won more attention for those initiatives, and certainly got me to temper my criticisms while I wait to see how this works out.

ACRES U.S.A. That was a year ago. Do you know how Whole Foods policy changes are coming along?

POLLAN. I can’t draw a single conclusion yet. I have heard very good things from a lot of local produce farmers in many parts of the country who feel that they are more welcome at Whole Foods than they were before. In the meat area I think that there has been a whole lot of confusion, and people have gotten very mixed signals from Whole Foods — some real reaching out by parts of the company telling people, “We really want to sell your grass-finished livestock,” but then finding that it is incredibly hard to do business with them, that there are many impediments. As one person described it, there’s been a Chinese fire-drill quality to dealing with them on meat. I think they are making the effort. From what I can see it’s not a situation where John Mackey can snap his fingers and make everything happen overnight. It’s a big, highly decentralized company, and some areas are making a stronger push than others to be serious about local. I was in their New York City stores this summer where I thought the amount of local product was pretty paltry given what is going on in the food scene there and what is available. So far it’s a mixed bag, but I think this is a sincere effort to move in the right direction, and I need to look more systematically at what is happening. How has Whole Foods done on these promises a year later? What is happening with the $10 million credit fund for local farmers? Where are we on grass-fed beef? That article is for somebody else to do, and I hope it happens. By the way, I’ve also talked to many of their employees who feel that they have gotten a signal to change, and they feel very emboldened by this. But I should say my information is not national, and it’s not up to date. Wherever I go, whatever market I’m in, I make a point to stop there and talk to the produce manager and the guy behind the meat counter.

整么 Food is a big, highly decentralized company, and some areas are making a stronger push than others to be serious about local.”

ACRES U.S.A. It’s only anecdotal information, but it is positive?

POLLAN. It is encouraging. We’re not there yet, and the meat issue is a little hard to read. More transparency on the meat would be really good. The other thing that happened is that Mackey came to Berkeley to engage in an onstage conversation with me.

ACRES U.S.A. How did that go?

POLLAN. It was really interesting, actually. There was a lot of apprehension on his part about coming to Berkeley, which is really a den of lions if you’re the president of Whole Foods.

ACRES U.S.A. He has had labor troubles there, organized protests, because he doesn’t want employees’ unions in his stores?

POLLAN. He has — and in other places, too. I think he was apprehensive about the whole thing, but in fact it went very well. It was very civil. I think some people expected an angrier exchange, and I’m not an angry person. That’s not how I deal with these things. So I know there were some people who thought it was too friendly an exchange, but I actually thought it was very productive. I think he surprised people, too. He showed a PowerPoint, which was his condition for appearing there, that he get a half hour to show a PowerPoint. “This is going to be terrible,” I thought, but it was so non-corporate. It included a great five minutes of brutal PETA videotape of slaughterhouses and made clear that his commitment on the animal welfare front was very strong. He was willing to show this tape even though they haven’t cleaned up their act to the extent that they need to if they want to stand on the ground of “we only serve humane food.” But he clearly is trying to push the company in that direction.

ACRES U.S.A. Does their acquisition of Wild Oats give them significant new power? Wild Oats didn’t seem to be that dynamic a company.

POLLAN. No, I don’t think that they were a strong competitor by any means. I’m not a business writer, so I can’t speak with any authority about the implications of that move. A lot depends on whether you perceive Whole Foods as being in the alternative food store world, in which case they are becoming a monopoly, or if you see them as being in the supermarket world, in which case they are still a pretty small player compared to some of the others.

ACRES U.S.A. The problem a lot of people have with Whole Foods and with the evolution of organic food is the kind of esthetic they are creating with the megastores, where you walk in and it feels like a theme park and you need a GPS device to find your way around. There’s a question that runs all through your book about food culture in this country and how the poor eat badly and get sick while the rich eat well and the middle are in between, and it’s not a brand new problem. Yet nobody in organic retailing ever faces it head-on and opens retail stores in underserved neighborhoods — poor neighborhoods. The real estate costs are not high in...
these places, and how do they know low-income people wouldn’t eat better food if they could find it nearby?

POLLAN. I think there are a lot of reasons to think that they would. I see people here taking the bus from West Oakland to get to the supermarkets over the line in Emeryville and having to schlep bags and bags of groceries home on the bus. I think it’s an underserved market, and I think there is probably money to be made in that marketplace. Whole Foods will tell you that the demographics of their clientele are not what you would expect in many places. They have higher numbers of Hispanic shoppers, higher numbers of African American shoppers than you might think, and they are not all wealthy people shopping in these stores. They often like to locate stores on the edge of these neighborhoods, as they have done in Washington, D.C., for example. They’re opening a big one in downtown Oakland. They actually feel that they can get that market, which is special occasion shopping. People in these neighborhoods are not buying there everyday as, say, you may find in Manhattan, where some people are doing all their shopping at Whole Foods, crazy as it sounds. So they do feel that there is a market. It’s not like they’re doing this out of a sense that they’re going to go into the ghetto and make a lot of money, but they like being on the edge of lower-income neighborhoods, and they feel that they can draw from both upscale and more downscaled marketplace. There are policy reasons that supermarkets are not in the inner cities, and it is also due to the way chains typically decide these things based on some very simplistic formula. Lots of big chains of all different kinds wouldn’t go into Manhattan for a long time. They just don’t like cities. They have a very anti-urban attitude, and it took a while for any kind of retail chain to really decide, “Oh, Manhattan — a lot of people live there, a lot of money.” Now you go to SoHo and it looks like a mall — but that’s only in the last 20 years. What came into the inner city instead were franchises, and indeed there were policies to help franchises get in. The Small Business Administration, for example, wanted to start businesses in the inner city, and they would loan you money if you were a local entrepreneur and you wanted to open a Taco Bell. They made it very easy for the franchises to get in, but there was nothing similar for supermarkets, which of course are a bigger investment. Also, the story you hear traditionally was that supermarket chains were concerned about what they call shrinkage, which is to say theft. I don’t know whether that was a racist excuse or if there was any basis to it, but what you heard is that you can’t make money there because security would be such a problem.

ACRES U.S.A. “Significant shrinkage.” Speaking of shrinking and swelling, you wrote that the price of food hasn’t been a political issue in this country at least since the Earl Butz era. Now that retail food prices are rising, do you think it is about to become a political issue?

POLLAN. Yeah. I think ethanol has the potential to make the price of food a political issue again. When everybody got on this bandwagon, the Bush administration in particular, they really didn’t look down the road to see that if you create this strong incentive for ethanol, you are going to raise food prices. It is starting to happen, and you’re hearing from people in the meat business, dairy, eggs, they are crying foul because their grain prices have doubled. Soy has gone up, too, because all that soy acreage is now in corn, so it affects all the grains. I’m not a futurist, but a couple of things could happen. One could be that this is a temporary blip, and that as so often happens in American agriculture everyone is getting in on the good thing — which is currently corn for ethanol — and the market will be flooded and collapse. We have seen this happen over and over again — whether it will take one year or two years or three years, I don’t know. That is one possibility. The other is that it will be a very positive thing for people trying to do pastured food. If corn prices are high, then let your chickens outside and start pasturing your dairy cows again. That is one way to deal with that. What has allowed the whole industrialization of our livestock has been cheap corn and cheap soy. That is the real subsidy there for all those guys, because a feedlot operator can feed cattle more cheaply than a farmer can when he can buy the corn at less than the cost of producing it. But if that equation changes, then farmers who are either growing their own feed or putting their animals on grass will be in a much better competitive situation, and that could be very positive for the growth of an alternative food system. Feedlots depend on artificially cheap grain, and that ain’t around anymore.

ACRES U.S.A. Does your mind reel when you try to imagine the United States without piles and piles of cheap corn? What would a post-corn republic look like?

POLLAN. There would be a lot more pasture and a lot less corn fields. The height of the grass in the Midwest would go down dramatically! I think that would be wonderful by many measures. In terms of the health of the land, the health of the animals, the health of the eaters, all would benefit from taking some of that land out of corn and putting it back in grass. Whether it will happen, I don’t know. We are planting more corn this year than we have in ages. At least in the short term, perhaps all that corn we’re feeding to our cars now means some of our animals will get off of it.

ACRES U.S.A. Unfortunately, that brings up the mind-warping topic of . . .

POLLAN. Not the Farm Bill!

ACRES U.S.A. . . . the Farm Bill. Earlier this year you wrote an essay for the Times that was rife with heresy, describing the Farm Bill as an egregious piece of corporate welfare reinforcing a status quo that is bad for American health, bad for the land, and bad for average farmers. You proposed renaming it the Food Bill and giving it a total overhaul. It was shocking to read these things in the leading national newspaper, and it triggered talk that this year might see a break in the orthodoxy. Of course, hell did not freeze over, and a status quo bill oozes through Congress as we speak. What did the fallout from that essay tell you?

POLLAN. There is a new politics around agricultural policy in this country, and there is more interest on the part of people who live on the coasts and in the cities in the Farm Bill — to the extent that the
people in Congress who have had this cozy committee situation to themselves are kind of annoyed. Collin Peterson, the Minnesota Democrat who is a senior member of the Farm Bill Conference Committee, gave a testy quote to the San Francisco Chronicle that these people in the city don’t know what they’re talking about when they talk about the bill. More people are showing up at their hearings and their markup sessions than ever before. That said, legislators are responding by digging in their heels and passing even more reactionary farm bills than we have had in a while. It is the same old Farm Bill, more or less. There are some good things hidden in the House bill, I hear, some initiatives that in certain worlds are very important. For example, if you are buying food for a school district you can give preference to local suppliers, even if they are not the low-cost supplier, without violating USDA rules. It doesn’t sound like a big deal, but there are a lot of local school districts that would like to start buying locally, and this will make it somewhat easier. It could turn into something. There is a lot of purchasing power there.

ACRES U.S.A. Would it take to crack the Farm Bill, considering all the money that’s behind keeping it the way it is?

POLLAN. There is a tradition in Congress of leaving it to these Midwestern senators and congressmen, and yet there is no one on these committees who represents consumers, who represents the environment, who represents the public health community. I think it would really take recasting these committees to some extent, and dropping this old tradition that you fill these committees up with Midwesterners. California is the biggest agricultural state in the country, but what is its representation on the committees? It’s slight to nonexistent. The committees are full of Midwesterners, so therefore it is all about commodity farming, which is only part of what we do in California. There is a lot more money made in agriculture here. So we talk about these people, and the next thing you know, Collin Peterson is bitching to the Chronicle about how people in California shouldn’t be messing with it, but the fact is they’ve got a lot at stake — they’re growing lots of food without a lot of government help, and by the way, they’re growing the kind of food we need to be eating more of.

ACRES U.S.A. When you see that little green-and-white organic label on a food product, do you ever wonder how many people realize the office behind that seal gets less than one percent of the USDA budget and is staffed by nine people?

POLLAN. There is very, very little support for it, which makes it all the more remarkable that this market has grown as it has. It shows that policy is important, but the consumer is really important, too, and the food industry can be changed by people voting with their forks, and that’s not a trivial thing. It created the organic movement. It’s creating the grass-fed movement, and the potential has just been scratched. There are so many more people whose eyes are being opened to the importance of their food choices as a matter of health, both personally and environmentally. Then there’s all the stuff we’re not even counting. Like, how many dollars are being spent at farmers markets? A lot of it is not being reported, so who knows? But it is growing in leaps and bounds.

ACRES U.S.A. Do you think more people are voting with their forks for food as medicine, or are we seeing some kind of a return to food as a source of pleasure that is also good for your health? Most people still choose industrial food, which is like using food as a recreational drug, isn’t it? Use it long enough and you need other drugs to treat you before the inevitable happens.

POLLAN. That is the way it goes with drugs, isn’t it? If you look at the farmers market movement, that is not just buying a different kind of food, because that food also needs to be cooked, for example. Going to the farmers market means that you are cooking, and as soon as you’re cooking, you are having meals, and as soon as you’re having meals, you are sitting down with other people. A whole lot of other changes that are cultural as well as economic or biological are happening when you start growing that market. People cannot get fast food at the farmers market.

ACRES U.S.A. Have you thought much about the way a lot of people think of food as a medicine, but they also enjoy it some of the time? It’s a very strange thing.

POLLAN. Actually, that is the subject of my next book. It is coming out in January, and its working title is In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto. What I’m trying to do in this book is look at the whole “food as health” phenomenon and trying to redefine the health side of it. The point I try to make is that your bodily health is very much connected to the health of the ecosystem and the food chain that you are eating from, and that you cannot separate the two. Whether you eat meat or don’t eat meat might not matter as much as what kind of meat you eat and how the animals you eat were fed. The idea that you can think about food in a vacuum and that if you eat the right kinds you’re going to be fine is simply not true. You have to enlarge your sense of what it means to be healthy. Health is what motivates people and their food choices, and I don’t think that’s a bad thing. I just think they have to understand that to get really healthy food you have to get it from healthy soil, with a healthy food chain all along the way without pharmaceuticals, without too much corn, without too much processing. All these things are connected, and health is the door through which people — most of them — first choose to buy organic. It is a very strong motivator, but we are looking at health in a very narrow, reductionist way when we shop, and that is why we are fooled by frozen entrees that make health claims. In other words, healthy eating has nothing to do with health claims on packages. In fact, I argue in this book that when you see a health claim on a package, run the other way.

ACRES U.S.A. It’s one of those ironclad laws like “never eat anything advertised on television?”

POLLAN. Or never eat anything that can’t rot. In fact, a third of the book is devoted to helpful rules for people to navigate the food landscape. But food with health claims has to have a package for the claims to be printed on, and that is a problem. In general the companies that have the money to do the research
to get the health claim by the FDA are food processors, they're not selling whole foods. You do have some crops such as the pomegranate or the almond that have industries that can pay for health claims, but in general it's the quiet food in the produce section that you want to eat, food that is not making health claims.

ACRES U.S.A.  The Omnivore's Dilemma included a detailed description of the processes behind high-fructose corn syrup, which no outsiders are allowed to see being made. How did you get that?

POLLAN. Since I couldn't get in to see the corn refining process, I was able to see the university version of it at the place where they teach people how to do it. I went to Iowa State, where they have a kind of mini-corn refining operation and soy refining operation, so I was able to see how they do it there on a small scale and have it explained to me by people who are food scientists. I didn't get to see the giant vats and the 12-foot diameter pipes through which the corn gets pumped, but I saw a mini-version of it.

ACRES U.S.A. Do the corn refiners worry that the giant vats look diabolical, like Frankenstein's lab? Why do they refuse to let anyone have a look at the process?

POLLAN. It simply may be that the companies that do it are not consumer-product companies, and they just don't care what any of us think. Archer Daniels Midland and Cargill really don't care what journalists think. In general they have had really bad experiences with journalists — I wonder why! I think it's more about the universe in which they operate. They only get grief from the New York Times or writers like me, so why bother? There's no penalty in saying no.

ACRES U.S.A. Do you think your book has contributed to a sort of folk-wisdom grapevine process among people who do not read this kind of thing? Word is getting around that you should maybe avoid this corn syrup stuff.

POLLAN. That's one message that has really gotten around. I have somewhat mixed feelings about it because corn syrup is not poison. The confusion is that fructose as a sugar appears to be a more serious issue vis-a-vis diabetes and fat because fructose basically goes directly to the liver, and unless there is a demand for more sugar in the body, more glucose in the body, the liver turns it right into triglycerides and it gets stored as fat. But what people fail to understand is that high-fructose corn syrup is not all fructose. It's about 50-50 fructose and glucose. If you took all the high-fructose corn syrup in the world and replaced it with table sugar — beet sugar or cane sugar, I don't know if that would help very much. The issue really is that high-fructose corn syrup is so cheap or has been so cheap and ubiquitous that it even ends up in products that have never had sugar before. The reason for that is it has these other qualities — it gives baked goods a nice golden coloring, it prevents freezer burn, it is a mild food preservative — so food scientists are throwing it into everything.

ACRES U.S.A. One theory is that junk food is a delivery system for high-fructose corn syrup, but maybe it's the other way around: since HFCS makes things look fresh and golden brown and is ten times sweeter than sugar — it has a special sweetness to it, if you've been avoiding it for years you can taste it instantly — maybe what high-fructose corn syrup does is make a lot of products palatable that would not be so edible without it?

ACRES U.S.A. Do you think the importance of soybeans as a processed food related to health and obesity is under-rated because soy has all these positive associations with soy milk and tofu, those nice holistic foods? Do you believe the distinction between processed soy and old-fashioned, pre-industrial fermented soy is not commonly understood?

POLLAN. I think that's absolutely right. Soy has connotations of health food all over it, either because of how it has been eaten traditionally or because it has had a much more clever industry. The amazing thing about soy is that it's a very unpromising food for humans — it's full of anti-tryptophan factors and all these anti-nutrients essentially that prevent you from being able to break it down in your body. It has to be processed to make it digestible. There is a traditional way of doing it, and there is a newer way of doing it, and they're not the same thing. There is a reason why the FDA has not granted GRAS — generally regarded as safe — status to soy isoflavins for use as additives. I think that's curious. There was a petition to do so by ADM, but it was withdrawn. I think we eat way too much soy. Twenty percent of our daily calories are now soy oil. That soy oil is usually partially hydrogenated. It's full of omega-6 fatty acids, which we're getting too much of. That's a pretty radical change to the diet, to get that many omega-6 fatty acids from one plant. Soy deserves the kind of hard look that its companion corn has been getting. But I think you're right, the reason it doesn't get it is because it has tofu out there in front. I've found that people have really strong feelings about soy. It's very hard to get objective information on it. Either people love it or they think it's a toxin. You go to the Weston A. Price Foundation and it sounds like soy will kill you. Then you go to most health food sites and soy will save you. You can get lost in it. All you really need to know is that the way it has traditionally been processed has kept huge populations healthy for thousands of years and that you don't want to get 20 percent of your calories from one kind of seed oil. You really want diversity in your

INTERVIEW

Reprinted from ACRES... December 2007 • Vol. 37, No. 12
diet. Too much soy, too much corn, too much of anything is not a good thing.

ACRES U.S.A. You mention the ancient Roman poet Virgil more than a few times in Omnivore's Dilemma. Why is he important?

“We are seeing the beginning of a new generation interested in getting into farming. In the last survey I read the USDA said the number of farmers has picked up for the first time in a hundred years.”

POLLAN. The pastoral tradition is what I’m evoking there, both the real pastoral tradition and the literary tradition. Virgil really starts that tradition in Western literature of celebrating the middle landscape, this grassy, pastoral landscape with animals that represents a kind of reconciliation of people with nature. It’s a very romantic idea, but when you go to Joel Salatin’s farm, you see that it’s a very realistic idea and a very beautiful idea, too. It’s such a powerful idea, in fact, that we often try to fake it, and that’s what I objected to in so much of the food marketing for organics — trying to evoke that pastoral, Virgilian idea on a carton of organic milk when in fact it’s coming out of a factory.

ACRES U.S.A. What is the key work of Virgil’s that you would recommend?

POLLAN. The Georgics is one, but the Eclogues is one of the first important pastoral poems. Virgil wrote about our symbiotic relationship with other species, and he wrote about the way humans can organize and manage the landscape and other species in it that is very positive. So the pastoral is kind of a halfway point between the wilderness, which Americans usually celebrate, and the city. It is something we don’t spend enough time working on in this country because we are so all-or-nothing about nature. It is either leave it alone and throw away the key, or trash it. We don’t have that middle ground. Grass is a big part of that middle ground. Virgil celebrates grass quite a bit. I think it is an important image and tradition for people doing alternative agriculture to seize and use as defense against people trying to fake it. The reason they’re trying to fake it is because it is a very attractive idea to a lot of consumers.

ACRES U.S.A. It’s embedded in us culturally?

POLLAN. I think so. I think it goes really deep. In fact, our love of grassy landscapes is probably hard-wired, as E.O. Wilson has suggested, because that’s what the savanna was. That is where you could find a lot of good food to eat and that is where you could be safe.

ACRES U.S.A. There is a question in your book about Joel Salatin’s Polyface Farm that is left hanging. Slightly rephrased, you ask, does his Shenandoah Valley operation represent the past or foretell the future?

POLLAN. It’s a really good question, and I think the answer is that it’s both. I don’t think it is a throwback. You would not find any farm like that if you turned back the clock. Only a very superficial look at Polyface Farm would say this is backward because the farm equipment is not fancy or up-to-date and the barn is kind of ramshackle. If you look closely, you are seeing a farm built on the most sophisticated understanding of the ecological relationships between different species and the land and the soil. That it is truly a knowledge-based business, and Joel is right when he talks that way about it. For my money it’s the future, but it is built off of borrowing the best things from the past.

ACRES U.S.A. That brings up a thorny question. If a lot of people followed his example, would we have enough land to do it?

POLLAN. That’s a real question. Can you scale it up? I think the bigger issue is not land, the bigger issue is farmers. We need a lot more farmers. The good news is that we are seeing the beginning of a new generation interested in getting into farming. In the last survey I read the USDA said the number of farmers has picked up for the first time in a hundred years.

ACRES U.S.A. Isn’t some kind of consistent support needed to nurture this trend? It doesn’t seem likely that giving new farmers $500 to help pay the certifier is going to cut it.

POLLAN. Exactly. We need more than that. They need support because the price of land is prohibitive, but there is a market for what they’re doing. There are people who want to do it, and if they can be supported, I think we will get more farmers. We also have to work on our zoning rules to make it more possible for them either to do on-farm processing or to keep a certain amount of farmland free. When you’re doing a development plan now you have to have open space in many areas. Why not require that there be a certain amount of farmland in a development so the development can feed itself? It’s going to take a lot of creativity to do this. It is just not going to happen on its own.
ACRES U.S.A. Barbara Kingsolver wrote a book about how she and her family left Tucson and revived an old farm in the same part of the country as Joel Salatin. Along the way she muses that Tucson would shrivel up and die without trucks full of food coming in because you can’t grow much out there.

POLLAN. And then you have the problem that where a lot of the good farmland is in this country, there aren’t a lot of eaters left. You can develop your wonderful local food system in parts of Iowa, but who’s going to buy the food? It’s been so depopulated.

ACRES U.S.A. How do we prepare for the likelihood that someday the cost of shipping food 3,000 to 5,000 miles to market will become prohibitive as the price of oil rises? How will the food industry cope?

POLLAN. The food industry has to change completely. It’s one of the reasons that we need to develop these alternatives, because when that happens — and it will happen, there’s no question — we will need other ways to feed ourselves. That is the national security reason why the federal government and local municipalities should be supporting local agriculture. If you’re really concerned about homeland security, you want to have those food chains here and vital and working when the oil runs out.

ACRES U.S.A. Do you think water shortages will play a bigger part over time as well?

POLLAN. Somebody was telling me about a meeting of organic farmers in New England in the 1970s, and they were just getting killed by produce coming out of California. They were saying, “Just wait for the water to run out and we’ll be fine.” They’re still waiting, but we don’t know. The time horizon may surprise us.