



Contact:

Cynthia López, clopez@pov.org, Cathy Fisher, cfisher@pov.org, 212-989-7425

Emergency contact: 646-729-4748

POV online pressroom: www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom

**“Food, Inc.,” Academy Award®-Nominated Critique of U.S. Food Industry,
Premieres Wednesday, April 21, 2010,
in Special 9 p.m. Broadcast on PBS’ POV Series**

Film Draws on Pioneering Work of Eric Schlosser (*Fast Food Nation*),
Michael Pollan (*The Omnivore’s Dilemma*) and other “Slow Food” Advocates

“An even-tempered but nonetheless horrifying dissection of the U.S. food industry.”
— Christy Lemire, *Associated Press*

“Robert Kenner’s alarming documentary, says plenty . . . about the industrialization of food production and delivery systems and how it has affected our health, environment, and economy. . . . It’s not a pretty picture. But *Food, Inc.* is an essential one.” — Steven Rea, *Philadelphia Inquirer*

“Does for the supermarket what ‘Jaws’ did for the beach.” — John Anderson, *Variety*

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

National Air
Date:

Food, Inc. has its American broadcast premiere as a special presentation on **Wednesday, April 21, 2010** at 9 p.m. on PBS as part of the 23rd season of **POV (Point of View)**, American television’s longest-running independent documentary series. POV is the recipient of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking. The series begins its regular season in June, with broadcasts on Tuesdays at 10 p.m. (Check local listings.)

Viewers can also watch **Food, Inc.** in its entirety on POV’s website, www.pbs.org/pov/foodinc from **April 22 – 28, 2010**.

Summary:

American agriculture has in many respects been the envy of the world. U.S. agribusiness consistently produces more food on less land and at cheaper cost than the farmers of any other nation. What could possibly be wrong with that? According to the growing ranks of organic farmers, “slow-food” activists and concerned consumers cited in **Food, Inc.**, nominated for a 2010 Academy Award® for Best Feature Documentary, the answer is “plenty.” As recounted in this sweeping, shockingly informative documentary, sick animals, environmental degradation, tainted and unhealthy food and obesity, diabetes and other health issues are only some of the problems associated with a highly mechanized and centralized system that touts efficiency — and the low costs and high profits that result from it — as the supreme value in food production.

The film also questions whether the industrial system at least produces the nutritious, health- and life-sustaining stuff we call food. To discover the answer, filmmaker Robert Kenner marshals mountains of data, vérité visits to production sites and footage of meat-packing operations secretly shot by workers, plus eye-opening testimony from farmers, workers, consumers’ advocates and the few industry people willing to talk in their own defense.

Filmmaker's
Statement:

"Eric Schlosser and I had been wanting to do a documentary version of his book *Fast Food Nation*," says director Robert Kenner, "and, for one reason or another, it didn't happen. By the time **Food, Inc.** started to come together, we realized that most of the food in the supermarket had become industrialized just like fast food. Then we realized there's something going on out there that supersedes foods. Our rights are being denied in ways that I had never imagined. And it was scary and shocking.

"But things can change in this country," he adds. "It changed against the big tobacco companies. We have to influence the government and readjust these scales back into the interests of the consumer. We did it before, and we can do it again."

About the
Filmmakers:

Robert Kenner, Producer/Director

Award-winning filmmaker Robert Kenner worked for more than six years to bring **Food, Inc.** to the screen. His previous films have played theatrically, on television and to President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore at the White House.

Prior to directing **Food, Inc.**, Kenner received the 2006 Peabody, the Emmy for exceptional merit in Non-Fiction Film-Making and the Grierson (British Documentary) for his Vietnam War documentary "Two Days in October." His other credits include "The Road to Memphis" segment of Martin Scorsese's epochal *The Blues* series on PBS; "War Letters" for PBS' *American Experience*; and numerous specials for National Geographic, including "Don't Say Goodbye," which was screened at the White House and won CableACE, Genesis and Emmy Awards. Kenner has also directed television commercials for ad agency giant Goodby, Silverstein & Partners. His "Fran" spot for Hallmark was named to *Adweek's* list of Best Spots of the Year, and "Origins," a company history Kenner made for Hewlett-Packard, won two Tele Awards and an Aegis Award.

Eric Schlosser, Co-producer

Eric Schlosser is an investigative journalist, best-selling author, playwright and a correspondent for *The Atlantic Monthly*. In 1998, what began as a two-part article on the fast food industry for *Rolling Stone* turned into the acclaimed book *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All American Meal* (2001). *Fast Food Nation* was on *The New York Times* best-sellers list for more than two years as well as on best-seller lists in Canada, Great Britain and Japan. It has been translated into more than 20 languages. The book also became the basis for the feature film "Fast Food Nation," executive-produced and co-written by Schlosser. His other writing credits include the books *Reefer Madness: Sex, Drugs, and Cheap Labor in the American Black Market* (2003) and *Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food* (co-written with Charles Wilson), both of which also became *New York Times* best sellers.

In 2007, Schlosser served as an executive producer of the Academy Award®-winning "There Will Be Blood," directed by Paul Thomas Anderson and based upon the novel *Oil!* by Upton Sinclair. In recent years, two of Schlosser's plays have been produced in London: "American" (2003) at the Arcola Theatre and "We the People" (2007) at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. In addition to *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Rolling Stone*, his work has appeared in *Vanity Fair*, *The Nation* and *The New Yorker*. He is the recipient of a National Magazine Award and a Sidney Hillman Foundation Award for his investigative reporting. Schlosser is currently at work on a book about America's prison system.

Special
Consultant:

Michael Pollan

Michael Pollan is the author of *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*, winner of the James Beard Award, and *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (2006), which was named one of the 10 best books of the year by both *The New York*

Times and *The Washington Post*. *The Omnivore's Dilemma* also won the California Book Award, the Northern California Book Award and the James Beard Award for best food writing. A young readers' version, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat*, is now available. Pollan's new book, *Food Rules*, was published in January 2010. He is also the author of *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World* (2001); *A Place of My Own* (1997); and *Second Nature* (1991). In 2009, Pollan appeared in the PBS documentary *The Botany of Desire*. A contributing writer to *The New York Times Magazine*, Pollan is the recipient of the James Beard Award for best magazine series in 2003 and the Reuters-I.U.C.N. 2000 Global Award for Environmental Journalism.

Pollan served for many years as executive editor of *Harper's* magazine, and is now the Knight Professor of Science and Environmental Journalism at UC Berkeley. His articles have been anthologized in "Best American Science Writing" (2004), "Best American Essays" (1990 and 2003) and the "Norton Book of Nature Writing." *Newsweek* named Pollan one of the top 10 new thought leaders of the decade. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with his wife, painter Judith Belzer, and their son, Isaac.

In the News: ***The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 15, 2010: "Why Some Foods Are Riskier Today" by Laura Landro**

Within the past few weeks there has been a salmonella outbreak linked to a sausage and salami facility in Rhode Island, a recall of chewy chocolate chip granola bars in California also potentially contaminated with salmonella and a recall of cheese in Washington state potentially contaminated with listeria monocytogenes, which can cause serious, sometimes fatal, infections. While the sausage contamination resulted in 225 people becoming ill in 44 states, the other two recalls didn't involve any illnesses. Without stricter food-safety enforcement, though, consumers may not be so lucky.

A growing number of Americans have been sickened by foodborne illness—in many cases from food they never considered risky. While most of the 76 million reported foodborne illnesses a year are mild, 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths are related to tainted food each year. Foodborne illness outbreaks appear to be increasing, the Food and Drug Administration says. Complete article: <http://bit.ly/9jKbZC>

Reuters, Feb. 15, 2010: "FDA warned Kellogg over contaminated Eggo waffles"
U.S. food safety regulators on Tuesday made public a January warning letter to Eggo waffle maker Kellogg Co ([K.N](#)) in which they said the company had not gone far enough to address food safety violations at its Atlanta frozen food plant.

An October 2009 Atlanta plant inspection found bacterial contamination and sanitation violations such as improper handling of trash and food, and insufficiently sanitized equipment, the FDA said. Complete article: <http://bit.ly/begRuB>

***The Hill*, Feb. 21, 2010: "Dingell criticizes 'slow to act' Senate on taking up food safety bill" by J. Taylor Rushing**

The dean of the House is calling out the Senate for not making food safety legislation a top priority. Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.), the longest serving member of the House and author of the lower chamber's food safety bill, told *The Hill* that the Senate "has been slow to act."

He said the upper chamber should take up the bipartisan bill that passed the House, pointing out that he's talked with many of his Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle about his measure. Complete article: <http://bit.ly/9YjHtp>

HealthNews.com: “Obama Administration Launches Healthy Food Financing Initiative” by Madeline Ellis

First Lady Michelle Obama hit the nail on the head when she said: “We all know the numbers; one in three of America’s kids are overweight or obese. And they didn’t get that way by themselves.” A number of factors have contributed, including habits and patterns in family life and community infrastructures that deter physical activity and increase the consumption of processed or fast foods. And although obesity among children and young people stretches beyond socioeconomic borders, poorer communities are often the hardest hit. Complete article: <http://bit.ly/aJxQDQ>

POV Website: The **Food, Inc.** companion website, www.pbs.org/pov/foodinc, offers a streaming video trailer of the film, interview with the filmmakers, background on the characters featured in the film, a list of related websites, organizations and books, lesson plans, discussion guides and these special features:

Food, Inc. Potluck

A promotional contest encouraging viewers to submit sustainable, wholesome recipes and host a potluck as part of a *Food, Inc.* pre-viewing party.

Top Ten Food Safety Issues

A list of food safety do’s and don’ts compiled by a food-safety expert.

Book Excerpts

Excerpts from Michael Pollan and Eric Schlosser’s books will be available for online viewing.

Misconceptions and Facts about Food

Learn how to distinguish fact from fiction when it comes to healthy eating.

GMO Quiz

Viewers can test their GMO savvy by taking this quiz about GMO foods.

Outreach: POV works with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in the film. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events for **Food, Inc.**, go to: <http://bit.ly/7mGeWO>.

POV is also working with educator Cari Ladd to create a lesson plan. The materials are available free of charge at www.pbs.org/pov/foodinc. Additional educational materials are available at <http://bit.ly/pm6sW>.

Credits: Director: Robert Kenner
Producers: Robert Kenner and Elise Pearlstein
Co-producers: Eric Schlosser, Richard Pearce and Melissa Robledo
Cinematographer: Richard Pearce
Editor: Kim Roberts
Original Music: Mark Adler

Running Time: 93:00

Food, Inc. is a production of Participant Media and River Road Entertainment, distributed by Magnolia Pictures.

Pressroom: Visit POV’s pressroom, www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom, for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 23rd season on PBS, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 300 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, FACT and public television viewers. Funding for POV's *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.

DVD REQUESTS: Please note that a broadcast version of this film is available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.