



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## FROM FAST FOOD TO ALL FOOD

The first section of *Food, Inc.* opens with a brief history of the fast food industry. It depicts how fast food has radically changed not only what and how people eat, but also farming practices and the entire global food system. As one example of this transformation, the movie focuses on how the food industry has modified the way chickens are raised, including changes in farm operations, the lives of farmers, the living conditions of chickens, and even the chickens themselves.

Read the information below and complete the survey on the back side of this page.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION BEFORE WATCHING THE MOVIE:**

When most of us think of a farm, we imagine a place with a red barn, green pastures, and chickens running around the yard. But the reality of most farms in the U.S. today is nothing like that. Farming has become so industrialized that many modern farms are like factories. Indeed, they are often called “factory farms.”

The poultry industry is an example of this change. Most chickens today are raised in huge metal buildings with no access to light or fresh air, confined together with thousands of birds, and “engineered” to grow so quickly that often their bones cannot keep up and they lose their ability to walk.

In this factory farming model, a single corporation may own or control all aspects of the chicken production, from the breeding, to the eggs, to the animal rearing and feed production, and on to slaughter, packaging, and distribution in stores and restaurants. The same corporation may also contract farmers in an arrangement where the corporation controls all aspects of raising the animals, while the farmer is responsible for the capital expenditures, the waste disposal, the labor, and much of the risk.

As the film shows, the transition to factory farming took place in response to our society’s move to fast food. As people came to expect food that was cheap and uniform in quality and taste, the food industry looked for ways to produce the food as efficiently and uniformly as possible. Unfortunately, while industrially produced food *appears* inexpensive, the price paid at the cash register doesn’t reflect its true cost. Factory farming creates a tremendous amount of water and air pollution, can be detrimental to public health, and relies on huge government subsidies, especially in the form of cheap corn —all real costs our society bears and all of which are paid, in the end, by all of us.

Factory farming also clearly affects the animals. In the factory farm, the animal is considered a unit of production rather than a living creature, and efficiency and earnings often outweigh animal health and welfare.

People have differing views on how much comfort and freedom farm animals deserve. Some say that to keep down costs, animals should be raised in the most efficient and inexpensive way possible — even at the sacrifice of their comfort, dignity, and/or freedom. Others argue that animals should not suffer needlessly and that they should have a certain level of cleanliness, space, and the ability to live as they were created to live.

What would be the biblical view on this question? Do humans have any God-given responsibility concerning the animals we eat? What do you think?

