chapters take a closer look at the nature of GM-related politics in the developing world. The final two chapters of the book, in Part v, reflect on the role of the emerging global biosafety regime in the wider context of global governance and its relation to other international treaties and laws.

One possible criticism of the volume is that more attention should have been paid to the public and scientific controversies surrounding GM foods. However, one could counter that it is too easy to become overly focused on the many microcontextual issues that others have already covered; and besides, chapters written about such details would mean less space for the important and original challenge of interpreting the idiosyncrasies of the complex global politics surrounding GM food. Not everyone will agree with the book’s focus, but in fact it constitutes the volume’s principal contribution. So much has been written about public perceptions of genetically modified food, that not enough scholarship has been devoted to critical thinking about the difficulties societies face when trying to govern novel technologies in an era of globalization.

Overall, the chapters are soundly written in an academic style, and the authors’ analyses are thought provoking. The book ends without a true conclusion, although the twelfth and final chapter does provide some semblance of an overview. Perhaps this lack of closure befits the current state of the still-developing international trade rules that attempt to coordinate a harmonious relationship among the different and often disparate regulatory systems. This volume is a collective work, and as such necessarily asks us to consider a plurality of perspectives, a necessary and welcome approach. The *International Politics of Genetically Modified Food* reminds us that biotechnology poses many cultural and policy challenges beyond the narrow questions of public perception and GM food safety. While there may have been some novel concerns about GM food, concerns about precaution, risk, liability, redress, and the environment are likely to transcend this particular technology.

—John T. Lang, Occidental College

*The River Cottage Meat Book*
Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall
Photography by Simon Wheeler
Berkeley/Toronto: Ten Speed Press, 2007
544 pp. Illustrations. $40.00 (cloth)

This is a big book, with full-page photographs of big animals and big hunks of meat, first published in England in 2004. A book this big is appropriate to a country as big as America, but England is the size of Alabama, and rural Dorset, site of the author’s River Cottage series of television programs and cookbooks, is smaller than Jefferson County, just one of the sixty-seven counties of Alabama. This isn’t to say that meat isn’t a big subject wherever it appears, but exactly where and how we get our meat is dependent on geographic scale, on the specifics of place. That’s why I couldn’t help feeling that despite the many issues that America and England share in the perversions of meat production in our modern industrial food system, Fearnley-Whittingstall’s primer of meat from pasture to plate reads like a nostalgic version of British pastoral, set in Thomas Hardy’s West Country, remote in time and place.

“A really good butcher’s shop, like a really good fishmonger’s, is an exciting place to be” (p.49), our English author writes with the best of intentions, but I don’t feel he’s writing to me. Julia Child urged us to seek out a local butcher shop nearly fifty years ago, and that’s when we still had one or two in my New Jersey suburb. While our English *Meat* tutor admits that 90 percent of U.S. shoppers buy their meats at supermarkets in comparison to only 70 percent of UK shoppers, the cultural gap between our countries is much wider than 20 percent. England’s mixed agricultural practices of plowed fields and livestock on small-scale farms on a small island is a heritage of their landscape, which was blotted but not utterly destroyed by the Industrial Revolution. In America only the colonies along the Eastern seaboard, and especially those of New England, furnished an ecology anything like that of Old England. The rest of America was the West and, as successive waves of homesteaders discovered, it was not pastureland but vast prairies and deserts, where small-farm sustainability was never possible, except in the minds and imaginations of our founding fathers. In America the speedy takeover of an entire continent by the mass production and distribution of agricultural products after our Civil War created a network very unlike England’s primarily because of scale.

For the same reason, agriculture in England suggests a coziness quite foreign to a country where buffalo and Indians were part of the wild. In England, this author has created a media persona suggestive of an aging Wild Child (his first book in 1993 was *A Cook on the Wild Side*) simply by wearing hippy hair and mudstained boots and bloodstained aprons. In such a highly tamed countryside, “wildness” means we see him actually at work on a farm, with his dogs and young children, tending his heritage-breed cows, sheep, and pigs on all that green grass. We see
him plucking feathers of some game bird he’s shot himself and carving a four-rib roast from one of his North Devon cows and spit-roasting one of his Gloucester Old Spot pigs. I have to remind myself that he’s an Oxford grad, with a degree in philosophy and political economy, and that he’s made up this regular guy image with an engaging tell-it-like-it-is voice. According to Bill Buford in The New Yorker, this image has sustained him through “nine television series, three specials, and ten books.” In America this country boy stance translates into a thinking man’s Emeril.

The fact that the author is not a farmer born, however, has lured him to think through the moral issues of meat eating, and he does so with straightforward commitment to the animals he raises to be killed. Part of “the symbiotic contract” (p.23) between men and animals as fellow creatures, he says, is “the contract of good husbandry” (p.24), which works only if we give animals a better deal than they’d have in the wild. His idea of the “consensual domestication” (p.23) of certain animals resembles the argument of Michael Pollan in The Botany of Desire, where he wittily claims that plants got the best of the deal in getting man to perpetuate them. The husbandman’s contract is that he makes the short life of his animals a happy one and that he respects them after their death by treating their meat with care. That means cheap meat is a contradiction in terms.

The author’s plaints about the abusive persecution of animals in our industrial system and the cheapening of meat in our supermarkets are familiar but bear retelling, because what’s true in England is far truer in the States. Far more than the English consumer, we demand cheap meat, which doubly degrades the animal that provides it. Perhaps Fearnley-Whittingstall’s best contribution in his celebration of meat is to connect directly good and bad farming not only to good and bad meat, but also to good and bad eating, and to place responsibility for the lazy use of an animal squarely on us, the cooks and eaters. The moral contract depends on our using not just the prime cuts but the whole animal for food—the offal, bones, fat—the 60 percent of each carcass that most Americans never see because it’s been disposed of as waste.

What we don’t see can hurt us. Near the beginning of his book, Fearnley-Whittingstall devotes a double-page spread to a picture sequence of the killing, skinning, and butchering of one of his cows. In America, this might fill a wall-size television screen with images nowhere visible in the forever glossy sequences of Emeril and Rachael Ray. It appears that American cooks and eaters haven’t yet got the courage to look at the big picture of meat. Perhaps the big picture depends less on scale than on moral depth, and for that we might well look to ancient roots in England’s green and pleasant land.

—Betty Fussell, New York City

**Notes**


**Tea Cult of Japan: An Aesthetic Pastime**  
Yasunosuke Fukukita  
xiv + 164 pp. Illustrations. $81.00 (cloth)

For many Western visitors to Japan, a tea ceremony is high on their “must do” list. This tea ceremony, known as _chanoyu_, is the epitome of Japanese society. For those unfamiliar with Japanese culture, _chanoyu_ is a mysterious and very complicated ritual.

Yasunosuke Fukukita’s classic 1955 book, _Tea Cult of Japan: An Aesthetic Pastime_, has recently been reissued by Kegan Paul. Compared to current books on the market about the tea ceremony, this is not a lavish publication, but it does reflect the classic, timeless nature of _chanoyu_. All photographs are in black and white, and although they are not of the best quality, they offer a good glimpse of what is to be expected by a tea ceremony guest. Some text is dated, such as in Chapter 2, “Training in the Etiquette,” in which Fukukita describes how all young Japanese women are encouraged to train in tea ceremony before marriage—to learn not only about tea but about correct manners and comportment. This custom went out of fashion decades ago.

The book informs the Western reader about the history of the tea ceremony, including the beginnings of this ritual centuries ago under its founder, Sen no Rikyu. It also explains how Rikyu’s two great-grandsons created the two main schools of tea, Urasenke and Omoteske. Fukukita describes the meaning and importance of the flowers, the flower container, the scroll, and the tea implements (tea caddy, tea bowl, and tea scoop). The many photographs and drawings clearly show the parts of a tea pantry and the layout of a tea garden. Fukukita precisely details how each object used in the tea ceremony is carefully selected for the guests and may be part of the host’s family treasures. He advises Western guests to display appreciation of the tea implements through comments and inspection of the items; not to do so would be deemed an affront to the host.