Understanding Science and Agriculture

Books recommended by
Jonathan Latham, Editor of Independent Science News

So Shall We Reap: What's Gone Wrong with the World's Food - and How to Fix it **by Colin Tudge**

A historical overview of world agriculture and where it is going. Excellent at providing the context left out in most narrow and scientific agriculture and biology courses. Cons: a little bit heavy to read, but worth it.

Kuhn vs Popper: The Struggle for the Soul of Science (Revolutions in Science) (2004) **by Steve Fuller**

Every student of science should know as much as possible of its sociology, history, and philosophy because these are its foundations, but most of it is written explicitly for academics and ignored or dismissed by working scientists. One way to get an idea of what is on offer is to read this book, which nicely demonstrates the perspective and rigor that examining the intellectual basis of a subject can provide.

Pandora's Poison: Chlorine, Health, and a New Environmental Strategy **by Joe Thornton**

Scientists and society have not managed to control the input of man-made chemicals into our environment. Based on underlying chemistry, Joe Thornton offers a new approach, and in explaining it examines the disturbing scientific basis of toxicology and why we keep having to reevaluate 'safe' chemicals. *Pandora's Poison* also gathers together diverse but important issues that scientific text books and university courses tend to avoid but that affect us all, from the underlying principals at work in interactions between industrial chemicals and biological organisms to the assumptions used in standard safety assessments.

Real Science: What it Is and What it Means **by John Ziman**

What is science? What are facts? How do scientists really work? These and many other questions are addressed by John Ziman, a former physicist who became interested in the sociology and philosophy of science. This book is a systematic but short overview and an excellent introduction to these fields.

The Precautionary Principle in the 20th Century: Late Lessons from Early Warnings **Edited by David Gee**

Leading scholars describe the history of major failures of 'scientific' regulation from the perspective of the precautionary principle. Chapters include asbestos, lead, fisheries, PCBs, sulphur dioxide, antibiotics, and BSE.

The Future Control of Food: A Guide to International Negotiations and Rules on Intellectual Property, Biodiversity and Food Security **by Geoff Tansey and Tasmin Rajotte**

A key route to corporate profitability is establishing a monopoly through patents based on intellectual property. Establishing control over food and food production is no exception. Therefore, countries and corporations are rushing to realize their assets and build on their strengths by controlling international treaties. As a key source of intellectual property, science is a leading mechanism for accessing power over the resources of others.

Science, Money and Politics: Political Triumph and Ethical Erosion **by Daniel S. Greenberg**

What bargains do the scientists who administer America's massive research enterprise strike in Washington to obtain their ever-greater budgets?

Science in the Private Interest: Has the Lure of Profits Corrupted Biomedical Research? **by Sheldon Krimsky**

How much of medical research is compromised by financial ties with industry. How far exactly is it bent out of shape? Sheldon Krimsky is an excellent guide to the underworld of biomedical research.