

ECONOMICS AGRICULTURE

DOCUMENTARY
30 MIN.

VERSIONS

Arabic, English, Spanish
19x30 min.

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Tricks of the Trade

Whenever we buy something – in the supermarket, the shopping mall or online – we participate in a market, local or global. But do we make intelligent decisions when we part with our money? And what are the consequences for the environment, our own health and that of the workers toiling to make the products we buy?

Only the well-informed can make responsible purchase decisions, though some manufacturers would prefer us all to be blissfully ignorant: For them, an awful lot of money is at stake. That is why they often declare crucial facts about their products only when forced to by law. And marketing strategies can often amount to perfidious manipulation. But a sustainable economy needs informed and critical consumers. We reveal some of the **Tricks of the Trade**.

01 Assault on the Senses – How Consumers are Manipulated M HD

Do we buy something because we really want to? Or are we seduced into doing so? Using increasingly sophisticated methods, businesses attempt to directly influence consumers at a subconscious level: Smell, sound or colors can be more important than the product itself.

02 The Price of a Long Shelf Life – The Health Risk of Packaging VoD HD

Modern packaging makes groceries look attractive, and means they last longer. That's good for transport and brand identity, with consumers often able to find the same products all over the world. But some packaging contains harmful substances that can affect the quality of the product.

03 Hip But Harmful – Toxins in Clothing VoD HD

Cool jeans, seductive underwear, elegant shoes: These days, fashionable clothes are often available at a bargain price. But there's a catch: It is not uncommon for toxic chemicals to be used in their manufacture, representing a danger to both the workers on the production line and the buyer.

04 Throwaway Society – Electrical Equipment That Simply Don't Last HD

Our lives are filled with consumer electronics and electrical appliances. When they stop working, it is often said they are not worth repairing and they are simply thrown away. Is industry intentionally making products that break down quickly and can't be fixed?

05 No More Use-By Date – Questionable Food Conservation Methods VoD SD

Preservation technology is revolutionising the food industry. Sophisticated cool chain logistics and new preservatives are increasing product shelf-life like never before. But some of these methods are questionable from a health point of view. And is it always a good idea to alter the natural state of a foodstuff to give it a long shelf-life?



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06 Healthy or Dangerous? – Synthetic Vitamins **SD**

Vitamins are essential for life; without them we would fall ill. The manufacturers of vitamin supplements would have us believe that the high doses they sell us contribute to good health. But scientific studies cast serious doubt on such claims: Many supplements are useless, and some are downright dangerous.

07 An Invisible Risk – Chemicals in Toys **VoD HD**

Unfortunately, our children's dolls, soft toys, diggers and building bricks are often produced in the same manner as so many other items: as cheaply as possible. As a result, many toys contain substances that can be harmful to our health.

08 The Beauty Myth – The Cons of Cosmetics **VoD HD**

The cosmetics industry is forever bringing new and ever more enticing make-up, creams and perfumes to market. They promise beauty and eternal youth, but sometimes trigger allergies and illness. That is because they often contain substances that are problematic for the skin or even downright toxic.

09 Bargain Bananas – Cheap at Any Price? **HD**

European consumers love bananas, and most prefer to snap up the fruit at rock-bottom prices in discount stores. And those stores outdo each other in pushing down the price – at the expense of those who grow the bananas. This means poor working conditions on the plantations and ever more environmental degradation in the banana-growing countries.

10 Self-Service – Putting the Customer to Work **VoD HD**

Retailers and other enterprises are transferring more and more of the work involved in sales to their customers. What appears at first glance to be simple and practical – self-service tills at the supermarket, ticket machines at stations, online shops or self-assembly flatpack furniture – represents above all a way for companies to cut costs. The valued customer is becoming a source of unpaid labor.

11 Pesticides in Tea – A Bitter Aftertaste **VoD HD**

Tea is the world's second most popular beverage after water, and Kenya is one of the world's largest growers of tea. Few tea drinkers realize that on many plantations pesticides are used; that is something the industry does not talk much about. The pesticides endanger the health of plantation workers and also leave traces in the final product.

12 What Does a T-Shirt Cost? – The True Price of a Product **VoD HD**

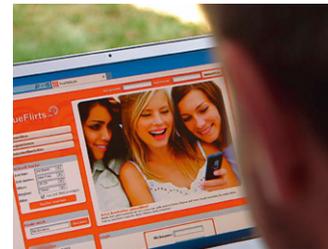
In the shops, garments are always marked with a price, but what do they really cost? What for instance is the human cost to those who make them in factories where conditions are often poor and pay is often low? Retailers in wealthy countries tend to keep quiet about where their goods come from and how much they pay for them. After all, the real cost of producing cheap clothing is usually a tiny fraction of the price on the tags.

13 Sweet Seduction – The Sugar Drug **VoD HD**

Sugar makes you happy, but also fuels a craving for more. Food manufacturers exploit this fact to their own ends. Commercials make enticing offers: the bigger the pack, the better the price! Product labels often conceal the true sugar content.

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14 The Likes Business – Advertising in Social Media VoD HD

Social media platforms don't only bring people together – they are also, perhaps first and foremost, powerful advertising tools. For businesses, politicians and celebrities it can be hugely important to increase the numbers of followers, friends or "likes". In order to do this, they use sophisticated marketing strategies. Or they simply buy their "fans".

15 The Online Dating Love Trap HD

Online dating sites are booming: More and more lonesome souls are searching for a partner online, and are prepared to pay for the service. But there can be nasty surprises in store: many dating sites use fake profiles. And criminals are also being drawn to the online love business by the promise of a quick profit.

16 The Diet Deception VoD HD

Have you ever tried unsuccessfully to shed those extra kilos by dieting? And was your wallet the only thing lighter at the end of it all? There are all kinds of weight-loss products on the market, many of them claiming their effectiveness is scientifically proven. Using a fake "chocolate diet", two journalists show how easy it is to manipulate scientific studies to deliver the desired outcome.

17 Ready Meals – Instant Temptation VoD HD

When people are in a hurry, they often opt for a ready meal. There's a huge variety to choose from, and food technicians are working constantly to improve taste and quality. The blend of fats and carbohydrates is finely tuned to impact the internal reward system of the diner. This has little to do with healthy eating – and much more to do with fat profits for the food industry.

18 Back in Fashion – The Resurgence of the Fur Industry VoD HD

For a long while, many people regarded fur as an ethical fashion taboo. The fur industry responded by claiming that fur is a "sustainable natural product" and by creating its own certification to back it up. It also focused on selling more small fur accessories instead of fur coats. The strategy has paid off, with customers reporting fewer ethical concerns over the purchase of fur. For the animals that bear the precious fur however, nothing has changed.

19 Optimized for the Senses – Food Design VoD HD

Humans are the only living beings that cook food so that it will appeal to all the senses. Food should not only satiate our appetites, it should also smell and look good. The food industry knows how to take advantage of this cultural accomplishment, with food designers creating an increasing number of products that claim to be an all-round sensory experience.