



A Precautionary Tale

How One Small Town Banned Pesticides,
Preserved Its Food Heritage, and Inspired
a Movement

Philip Ackerman-Leist
foreword by Vandana Shiva

\$19.95 • Paperback
6 × 9 • 240 pages
ISBN 978-1-60358-705-1
Pub Date: November 08, 2017

For media inquiries contact
Christina Butt
cbutt@chelseagreen.com
802.295.6300 ext.127

For author events contact
Jenna Stewart
jstewart@chelseagreen.com
802.295.6300 ext.120



“The movement for freedom from poisons in our food and agriculture is the most important freedom movement in our times. . . . Read the story of Mals to get inspired. And *act.*”

—from the foreword by **VANDANA SHIVA**

The recent uncovering of The Poison Papers—a collection of documents revealing years of apparent collusion between companies producing pesticides and other chemicals and regulatory agencies such as the EPA—shows just how difficult it is to stop corporate, agricultural, and other powerful interests from spraying dangerous chemicals, even when human health and the environment are at risk. So how did a tiny town in Northern Italy prevail against big agriculture and make their town a pesticide-free zone?

A Precautionary Tale shares the inspiring story of a group of citizens in Mals, Italy who fought Big Ag and won and, in doing so, became the first place on Earth to ban pesticides by a referendum vote. Their colorful, courageous, and ultimately savvy campaign is being heralded around the world as a landmark effort in the fight for toxic-free food and agriculture systems—and a model for other locales, near and far.

For hundreds of years, the people of Mals had cherished their traditional foodways and kept their local agriculture organic. Yet the town is located high up in the eastern Alps, and conventional apple producers, heavily dependent on pesticides, were steadily overtaking the valley below. Aided by climate change, Big Apple crept further and further up the region’s increasingly warmer valleys and mountainsides, its toxic sprays drifting onto the farms and fields of Mals—threatening to destroy paradise.

In an iconic display of direct democracy in action, a diverse group of activists joined together to reclaim the health, biodiversity, and economic security of their town. As author Philip Ackerman-Leist recounts their uprising, we meet the organic farmers, local business owners, scientists, and others who together orchestrated one of the rare revolutionary successes of our time and inspired a movement now coursing its way through Europe, the United States, and beyond.



Philip Ackerman-Leist, author of *Rebuilding the Foodshed* and *Up Tunket Road*, is a professor at Green Mountain College, where he established the college’s farm and sustainable agriculture curriculum, directs its Farm & Food Project, and founded its master of science in sustainable food systems, the nation’s first online graduate program in food systems, featuring applied comparative research of students’ home bioregions. He and his wife, Erin, farmed in the South Tyrol region of the Alps and North Carolina before beginning their nineteen-year homesteading and farming venture in Pawlet, Vermont. With more than two decades of field experience working on farms, in the classroom, and with regional food systems collaborators, Philip’s work is focused on examining and reshaping local and regional food systems from the ground up.

<http://media.chelseagreen.com/a-precautionary-tale>