

GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT – WEEKLY NEWS BRIEF

August 14 – August 21, 2008

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Key Articles

- ***Reinvesting in Agriculture to Reduce Poverty***, by Homi Kharas, Senior Fellow, *Brookings Institution*, August 19, 2008
High food prices are the result of supply being unable to keep up with demand, given today's costly technology. They are an easy scapegoat but are not responsible for hunger and malnutrition in the developing world. The real point is that the status quo of low food prices was itself the problem. The World Bank president, Robert Zoellick, called the hunger and malnutrition goal the "forgotten MDG", a silent tsunami that threatened humanity. Now the alarm has been rung and misguided agricultural policies are being rectified. As Paul Romer, one of the leading economists of our generation has said on another occasion, "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste". There is every hope that changes in trade policy, investment in agriculture and more agricultural science and technology—all of which are called for by Mr. von Braun—will result from high food prices.
http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0804_poverty_kharas.aspx
- ***In Need of a Green Revolution, an Interview with Robert Paarlberg***, *Harvard International Review*, June 9, 2008
In terms of access to agricultural technology, how far do small-scale African farmers lag behind farmers in developed countries? They lack almost everything across the board. Farmers in advanced countries exclusively plant modern seed varieties. In Africa, only one-third of farmers use modern seeds, and the rest use the traditional varieties that they have been using and reusing for generations.
<http://www.harvardir.org/articles/1723/>
- ***USDA, China sign biofuels agreement***, *Southeast Farm Press*, August 21, 2008
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) of the People's Republic of China have signed an important agreement to collaborate on biofuels research. The signing came during a meeting of over 200 scientists, industry leaders and

government officials in Houston, Texas during the International Conference on Sorghum for Biofuel

<http://southeastfarmpress.com/biofuels/biofuels-sorghum-0821/>

- **UN Warns of food 'neo-colonialism'**, by Javier Blas and Andrew England, *Financial Times*, August 20, 2008

Boosted by revenues from the oil boom and concerned about food security, the kingdom is scouring the globe for fertile lands in a search that has taken Saudi officials to Sudan, Ukraine, Pakistan and Thailand. Their plan is to set up large-scale projects overseas that will later involve the private sector in growing crops such as corn, wheat and rice.

<http://www.businessspectator.com.au/bs.nsf/Article/Fed-by-the-colonies-HNUUP?OpenDocument&src=sph>

Contact the Financial Times: +44 (0) 20 7873 3000

- **Food price rises push 14m to the brink of starvation**, by Tim Albone and Jack Malvern, *UK Times*, August 18, 2008

Rapidly rising global food costs have contributed to the worst hunger crisis in East Africa for eight years, with at least 14 million people at risk of malnutrition, aid agencies said yesterday.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article4553673.ece>

- **Africa's food crisis the handiwork of IMF, World Bank**, by Walden Bello, *Business Daily Africa*, August 18, 2008

At the time of decolonisation in the 1960s, Africa was not just self-sufficient in food but was actually a net food exporter. Agriculture is in deep crisis, and the causes are many, including civil wars and the spread of HIV-Aids. However, a very important part of the explanation was the phasing out of government controls and support mechanisms under the structural adjustment programmes to which most African countries were subjected as the price for getting IMF and World Bank assistance to service their external debt.

http://www.bdafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9406&Itemid=5821

Contact Business Daily Africa: +254 20 328 8121

- **Waste not, want not**, *The Economist*, August 18, 2008

The report looks at 53 cities in the developing world, to see to what extent local farmers water their crops with untreated sewage or industrial effluent, either directly or through contaminated local water sources. This form of agriculture, it turns out, is especially beneficial to women. In some cities, women comprise more than 70% of the total number of farmers. For those who worry about the status of women in the developing world, farming with wastewater looks like a good thing.

http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story_id=11951255

- **Trade Talks Need to be about Trade, Not Preventing It**, by Bob Stallman, *Agricultural Farm Bureau*, August 18, 2008

While much has been written about the reluctance of the United States to modify our farm program, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the nation's largest general farm organization, has a long history of supporting opening markets – including our own. We have strongly backed the administration in these negotiations and regularly expressed a willingness to lower our farm program supports commensurate with increased market access reform by other nations.

<http://www.fb.org/index.php?fuseaction=newsroom.focusfocus&year=2008&file=fo0818.html>

- **All you can't eat**, by Rishi Raote, *Business Standard (India)*, August 17, 2008
What's behind the food crisis, according to farmers' rights campaigner Raj Patel. "All data is political," says Raj Patel, researcher, writer and campaigner for farmers' rights and against the global "food system". He uses data to draw an hourglass-shaped figure — a simple graph which represents the inequality in the food industry, where large numbers of growers and eaters are separated by a tiny number of large corporations. In his book he tries to show how governments and trade agreements work in favour of the few rather than the many — as the title suggests.
<http://www.business-standard.com/india/storypage.php?autono=331579&chkFlg=>
- **Food reserves to protect the poor**, by Joachim von Braun, *The New Nation (Bangladesh)*, August 15, 2008
The current food crisis has several causes—rising demand for food and feed, biofuels, high oil prices, climate change, stagnant agricultural productivity growth—but there is increasing evidence that the crisis is being made worse by the malfunctioning of world grain markets. Given the thinness of major markets for cereals, the restrictions on grain exports imposed by dozens of countries have resulted in additional price increases. A number of countries have adopted retail price controls, creating perverse incentives for producers. Speculative bubbles have built up, and the gap between cash and futures prices has risen, stimulating overregulation in some countries and causing some commodity exchanges in Africa and Asia to halt grain futures trading. Some food aid donors have defaulted on food aid contracts. The World Food Programme (WFP) has had difficulty getting quick access to grain for its humanitarian operations. Developing countries are urgently rebuilding their national stocks and re-examining the "merits" of self-sufficiency policies for food security despite high costs.
<http://nation.ittefaq.com/issues/2008/08/15/news0957.htm>
- **Food aid left off the table**, by Sophia Murphy, *Asia Times*, August 15, 2008
When sudden food price increases started to make headlines last summer, an estimated 852 million people were already living with crippling hunger, which the United Nations defines as continuously getting too little food to maintain a healthy and minimally active life. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates another 50 million people were added to the count in 2007. For people living with hunger, a long-term solution won't come quickly enough. Many of them will need emergency assistance. Clearly, the UN and donor nations need to plan and invest more strategically to ensure a more food-secure future.
http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Global_Economy/JH15Dj03.html
- **Gates Foundation Promises 17.6 Million in Emergency Food Grants**, by Caroline Preston, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, August 14, 2008
[The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](http://philanthropy.com/news/updates/index.php?id=5437) says it will donate \$17.6-million to help people who have been affected by rising food prices worldwide. An estimated 950 million people are at risk of hunger and malnutrition worldwide because of high food and fuel prices, according to the United Nations. Young children and women are suffering the most, while small farmers have been particularly hard hit by increases in fertilizer and transportation costs.
<http://philanthropy.com/news/updates/index.php?id=5437>
- **UN Program to Help Hunger Hot Spots**, by Ariel David, *Time Magazine*, August 12, 2008

A U.N. agency rolled out a \$214 million program Tuesday to help 16 needy places hit hard by high prices for food and oil, amid a crisis already making it hard for aid groups to provide enough food for the world's hungry.

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1832021,00.html>

New Reports

- ***Oil Crops Outlook***, *Economic Research Services (USDA)*, August 13, 2008
USDA's August *Crop Production* report raised the 2008 sown acreage for soybeans to 74.8 million acres and harvested acres to 73.3 million. Based on surveys of the current growth stage for soybeans, USDA's objective yield functions indicate a 2008 national average at 40.5 bushels per acre. Total soybean production for 2008 is forecast 27 million bushels lower this month to 2.973 billion. The 2008/09 soybean farm price was revised down to \$11.50-\$13.00 per bushel. Includes international outlook.
<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/OCS/OCS-08-13-2008.pdf>
- ***Crop Production***, *National Agricultural Statistics Services (NASS)*, August 12, 2008
Corn Production Down 6 Percent from 2007, Soybean Production Up 15 Percent from Last Year
Cotton Production Down 28 Percent from 2007. All Wheat Production Virtually Unchanged from July Forecast
http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/CropProd/CropProd-08-12-2008_revision.pdf
- ***An unofficial guide to agricultural safeguards***, World Trade Organization, *August 5, 2008*
The talks among ministers meeting in Geneva from 21 July 2008 broke down on 29 July over the special safeguard mechanism (SSM). What exactly is the problem? **The problem is not about protecting poor farmers in general** — that is already covered by what has been agreed on the formula for developing countries to cut tariffs; smaller or no cuts for “special products”; different treatment for small and vulnerable economies, recent new members and special cases such as Bolivia; and exemptions for least-developed countries. It is not even about the SSM itself. **This is about one particular circumstance.**
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/guide_agric_safeg_e.htm
- ***World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates***, *USDA Agricultural Marketing Service*, August 12, 2008
<http://www.usda.gov/oce/commodity/wasde/latest.pdf>
Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States: Monthly Summary, *USDA Economic Research Service Data Sets*, August 12, 2008
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FATUS/MonthlySummary.htm>
- ***Hearing to US Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Food, Feed, and Fuel Production: Today and Tomorrow***, August 18, 2008
http://216.40.253.202/~usscanf/index.php?option=com_events&task=view_detail&agid=14&year=2008&month=08&day=18&Itemid=44
 - ***Ethanol gets some love in Omaha—DTN Agriculture Policy Blog on the Omaha hearing***, by Chris Clayton, August 19, 2008
A hearing Monday in Omaha largely gave ethanol the red-carpet treatment and reflected what is common within congressional hearings.

<http://www.dtnprogressivefarmer.com/dtnag/common/link.do?symbolicName=/ag/blogs/template1&blogHandle=policy&blogEntryId=8a82c0bc1b80cdb9011bdb27d4d103c2&showCommentsOverride=false>

- ***Global Agriculture Supply and Demand: Factors Contributing to the Recent Increase in Food Commodity Prices***, USDA Economic Research Service, updated report July 2008

World market prices for major food commodities such as grains and vegetable oils have risen sharply to historic highs of more than 60 percent above levels just 2 years ago. Many factors have contributed to the runup in food commodity prices. Some factors reflect trends of slower growth in production and more rapid growth in demand that have contributed to a tightening of world balances of grains and oilseeds over the last decade. Recent factors that have further tightened world markets include increased global demand for biofuels feedstocks and adverse weather conditions in 2006 and 2007 in some major grain- and oilseed-producing areas.

<http://media.npr.org/documents/2008/aug/prices.pdf>

New Books

- ***Climate Change and Agriculture in Africa: Impact Assessment and Adaptation Strategies***, by Ariel Dinar et al,
Agricultural systems and farmers in Africa are at the forefront of vulnerability to climate change and require concerted and focused policies and investment interventions. Yet, up until now there has been little, if any, comprehensive understanding of climate change vulnerability across Africa to guide effective policy formation and investment. This landmark book encompasses a comprehensive quantitative analysis and assessment of the extent of potential economic impacts of future climate change, and value of adaptation measures in Africa for different zones, regions, countries and farm types.
<http://www.amazon.com/Climate-Change-Agriculture-Africa-Assessment/dp/1844075478>
- ***Overfed and Undernourished, two books describe a global food system on the brink of collapse***. By Judith Weinraub, *Washington Post*, August 17, 2008
Because, as Paul Roberts and Raj Patel will tell you, the food we eat is part of a global system, one made possible by international trade and transportation systems as well as advances in preservation technologies. And, they warn, this once promising and plentiful system has become vulnerable, over-extended and inadequate to feed the hungry.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/14/AR2008081402463.html?sid=ST2008081503039&s_pos=
Contact the Wall Street Journal: (212) 416-2000
- ***Journalist and Author: Book discussion on the food crisis with Paul Roberts, author of The End of Food***, *Washington Post*, August 19, 2008
Given the problems we were having with issues such as food borne illness, nutrition, and obesity, it seemed we had come to an end in our confidence in that food system. Since then, however, with food prices rising, and with renewed concerns about feeding a future population that will not only be larger, but rich enough to eat higher up the food chain, the question seems a bit more literal.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2008/08/15/DI2008081502606.html>

Congressional Testimony

- **Robert T. Watson, Director of IAASTD**, *Testimony to the Financial Services Committee of the US House of Representatives*, May 14, 2008
The recent food price increases are a major cause for concern around the world – the price of wheat and rice has doubled in the last six months and international dairy prices increased sharply in 2007 recording particularly sharp gains in late spring. In March 2008, rice prices on the world market were at a 19-year high and wheat prices at a 28-year high, although in real terms they are at similar levels to prices in the mid-1990s. In developing countries, where most of the household income is spent on food, increased food prices are undermining attempts to reduce hunger and pushing some of the world’s poorest people into abject poverty.
http://www.house.gov/apps/list/hearing/financialsvcs_dem/watson051408.pdf
- **Raj Patel, Fellow of Institute for Food and Development Policy**, *Testimony to the Financial Services Committee of the US House of Representatives*, May 14, 2008
We live amidst a profound and worsening contradiction. While we produce more food than ever before, hunger is rampant. In 2006, 854 million people were food insecure.¹ This figure is certain to increase in 2007 and 2008, with the recent global rise of food prices.
http://www.house.gov/apps/list/hearing/financialsvcs_dem/patel051408.pdf
- **Andrew S. Natsios, Former Administrator USAID**, *Testimony to the Financial Services Committee of the US House of Representatives*, May 14, 2008
While this crisis presents grave risks to human life and the potential for terrible suffering, it can also be the catalyst for a new world wide campaign to spread the Green Revolution of the 1960’s to areas of the world which are yet untouched by it particularly in sub-Sahara Africa. We should set as an international objective the end of the specter of famine and severe food insecurity in our time. We can do this through a two pronged approach: a much greater investment in agricultural development and reforms to our food aid programs.
http://www.house.gov/apps/list/hearing/financialsvcs_dem/natsios051408.pdf
- **Arvind Subramanian, Senior Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics**, *Testimony to the Financial Services Committee of the US House of Representatives*, May 14, 2008
The severity of the global food crisis is undeniable. As the chart shows, prices of major commodities have increased substantially over the last three years, and especially, in the last few months. According to the World Bank, about 100 million people might be thrown back into the ranks of the poor because of these price rises (see chart attached). There have been riots in a number of countries, and the Bank has identified 33 as especially vulnerable. The poor are especially vulnerable because they spend the largest portions of their income on food. For example, in Nigeria, about 70 percent of income is spent on food, 75 percent in Vietnam, and 50 percent in Indonesia compared with 12 percent in the United States.
http://www.house.gov/apps/list/hearing/financialsvcs_dem/subramanian051408.pdf

Food Crisis Developments

- *The political economy and the global food crisis*, by Tee Ngugi, *Daily Nation*, August 20, 2008

Who would have thought that in June 2008, world leaders meeting in Rome to discuss the international food crisis would give us a 21st century version of Antoinette's attitude? The solutions offered by the delegates, far from being radical departures from the past, confirmed a continuing faith in interventions that have failed to address the fundamental cause of food emergencies.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/-/440808/461216/-/3l6n1c/-/>

Contact the Daily Nation: +254 20 3288430/7/8

- ***Water everywhere, and not a drop to grow***, by Colin Chartes, *BBC*, August 20, 2008
Limited availability of fresh water is often overlooked as a cause of food scarcity and environmental decline, according to Colin Chartes. Governments should be ramping up efforts to make sure we have enough to grow crops as well as enough to drink, he argues
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7564140.stm>
- ***Update 1-US food prices to post biggest rise since '90: USDA***, by Christopher Doering, *Reuters*, August 20, 2008
U.S. consumers should brace for the biggest increase in food prices in nearly 20 years in 2008 and even more pain next year due to surging meat and produce prices, the Agriculture Department said on Wednesday.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/marketsNews/idUSN2047383220080820>
Contact Reuters: +44 20 7542 9484
- ***Wheat jumps on dry weather in Argentina, Australia***, by Stevenson Jacobs, *Washington Post*, August 20, 2008
Wheat prices jumped above \$9 a bushel Wednesday on expectations that warm, dry weather in Argentina and Australia will hurt crops and tighten world supplies.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/20/AR2008082003019_pf.html
Contact the Washington Post: 703.469.2500
- ***Soaring Food Prices Threaten Progress***, by Daniel Zwerdling, *National Public Radio*, August 19, 2008
Food prices around the world have fallen a bit since they set records this spring, which triggered riots and angry protests in dozens of countries from Haiti to Egypt. But aside from that small blessing, they're still higher than they've ever been — and the prices are starting to take a toll.
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93717361>
- ***Food crisis looms in the north***, *IRIN*, August 19, 2008
Food insecurity in northern Uganda, a region recovering from two decades of conflict, is approaching crisis levels due to a combination of factors, including bad weather and lack of adequate farm inputs, agricultural officials have cautioned.
<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=79889>
Contact IRIN: +1 917 367 2422
- ***Dubai forum to focus on global food crisis***, *Emirates Business* 24/7, August 19, 2008
A major conference is being held in Dubai to draw attention to the impact of the global food crisis on the Middle East. The crisis has triggered a broad review of agricultural and economic

priorities in the region, where nearly all the states are net food importers. And new challenges such as climate change have hit agricultural production in the poorest countries.

http://www.business24-7.ae/Articles/2008/8/Pages/08192008_2a76aa832fcc4cf0991c85731286140c.aspx

- **Food crunch looming in Kenya**, by Zeddy Sambu, *Business Daily Africa*, August 19, 2008
Kenya will not meet the 34 million bags in national annual maize consumption requirements, and imports will be necessary to meet the shortfall, David Nyameino, the chairman for the Cereals Growers Association (CGA) said today.
http://www.bdafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9452&Itemid=5865
Contact Business Daily Africa: +254 20 328 8121
- **World Water Crisis Underlies World Food Crisis**, *Environment News Service*, August 18, 2008
"Behind the world food crisis is a global freshwater crisis, expected to rapidly worsen as climate change impacts intensify," Leape said. "Irrigation-fed agriculture provides 45 percent of the world's food supplies, and without it, we could not feed our planet's population of six billion people."
<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/aug2008/2008-08-18-01.asp>
- **Grains' Price Slide Could Halt as Demand Continues to Rise**, by Sarah McFarlane, *Wall Street Journal*, August 18, 2008
Grain prices have been caught up in the global commodities selloff. But that should soon be coming to an end, say some analysts, who argue that demand isn't squarely linked to economic health. "At the end of the day, consumers have to eat," said Paul Braks, senior agricultural commodities analyst at Rabobank. Less clear, however, is whether the weakness in grain prices signals a change in investor sentiment toward the markets or merely reflects upward revisions of the estimated size of this year's bumper crop, aided by good weather.
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121902056126148361.html>
Contact the Wall Street Journal: (212) 416-2000
- **Ethiopia: Warning for Children worldwide**, by Charles MacCormack, *Washington Times*, August 17, 2008
A perilous combination of factors - including soaring energy prices, bad weather (possibly linked with climate change), poor harvests, and dwindling food stocks - has created the most dangerous hunger crisis in decades. Adding to the crisis: a growing demand for biofuels that is further depleting the food supply. As I witnessed in Ethiopia, poor families there and elsewhere are resorting to coping strategies that will lead to long-term harm - such as eating less protein-rich foods, skipping meals, pulling children out of school, selling off livestock and family assets and even foregoing health care.
- **High Prices intensify Ethiopian hunger crisis**, by Barney Jopson, *Financial Times*, August 17, 2008
Ethiopia has emerged as one of the biggest victims of global inflation after food prices in the country nearly doubled in the 12 months to July, intensifying a hunger crisis that has already affected millions of people. The crisis has been magnified by local factors – drought, hoarding, and a splurge of public infrastructure investment that has left the finances of the country's cash-strapped government under strain.
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c5d27092-6c78-11dd-96dc-0000779fd18c.html>

Contact the Financial Times: +44 (0) 20 7873 3000

- ***New crop report is a patch of good news***, *Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune Editorial Board*, August 15, 2008
The August crop report from the Department of Agriculture was welcome news for many farmers, feedlot operators, food manufacturers and grocery shoppers. It indicated a sunnier outlook than had been expected after a wet June.
<http://www.startribune.com/opinion/editorials/27035914.html?elr=KArks7PYDiaK7DUgyE5D7UiD3aPc: Yyc:aUU>
- ***Venezuela: price rises of up to 50% for 15 basic foods***, *Merco Press*, August 14, 2008
Venezuela raised regulated prices of 15 basic foods ranging from bread to beef by up to 50% and removed price controls from other goods in an attempt to ease sporadic shortages in supermarkets. Since 2003 the administration of President Chavez has imposed price controls on many basic foodstuffs to combat inflation, which has also forced producers to pursue other lines of profitable work causing sporadic shortages. The Central Bank said last week that in July, 12% of the products that make up the basic food basket, which is used to measure inflation, had experienced shortages.
<http://www.mercopress.com/vernocia.do?id=14245&formato=HTML>
- ***Scientists condemn 'ill-informed, negative' Prince over GM crops warning***, by Mark Henderson, *UK Times*, August 14, 2008
The Prince's comments, in which he blamed GM food and modern agriculture for environmental and social problems such as climate change and food shortages, were described by leading scientists as "shockingly ill-informed". Plant researchers said that he had completely misunderstood the benefits and risks of GM crops, which the Prince labelled a "gigantic experiment with nature and the whole of humanity that has gone seriously wrong". They also ridiculed his contention that agricultural biotechnology was contributing to major challenges such as global warming.
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/science/article4526133.ece>
- ***Thai Rice faces 'Intense' Vietnam Price Competition***, by Jason Folkmanis, *Bloomberg News*, August 14, 2008
Vietnam's return to the rice-export market is pushing down prices, stoking competition and helping ease concerns about a potential global shortage of the staple, the U.S. government said. Thailand is the world's biggest rice exporter. Vietnam was third in exports last year after Thailand and India, and will move up to second this year, based on [U.S. projections](#).
<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601080&sid=aloK7gM4OxAs&refer=asia>
- ***Aid group Warns of Horn of Africa Food Crisis***, by Alisha Ryu, *Voice of America News*, August 13, 2008
British humanitarian organization ActionAid is calling for governments in the Horn of Africa to help small-scale farmers and for donor nations to increase funding and food-aid shipments to the region. The organization says without urgent action, several million people in five countries could face starvation in the coming months.
<http://www.voanews.com/english/2008-08-13-voa44.cfm>

- **Food prices unlikely to see relief: USDA's Schafer**, by Christopher Doering, *Reuters*, August 12, 2008
A perennial crop like switch grass or sugar cane reduced the amount of fuel needed to plant and till fields each year, making it more efficient to produce cellulosic ethanol, he said. Corncobs and switch grass are not used in food production and thus would not affect food prices.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/GCA-Agflation/idUSWB00955220080812?sp=true>
Contact Reuters: +44 20 7542 9484
- **Big corn may stabilize U.S. food prices: Official**, by Charles Abbott, *Reuters*, August 12, 2008
Food prices are forecast to rise by 5 percent this year, the largest annual increase since 1990, and by 4.5 percent in 2009, led by higher red meat and poultry prices. "I don't think we're going to see a lessening here over the last six months of the year," Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer told Reuters. He said "we're seeing a leveling off" of price increases.
Contact Reuters: +44 20 7542 9484
- **UAE rice shortages likely to ease in October, says traders**, *Gulf in the Media/Reuters*, August 11, 2008
A rice shortage in the United Arab Emirates due to export curbs is likely to ease in October when producers replenish stocks and boost supplies, traders said yesterday. But UAE consumers – for whom rice is a major food staple along with bread – will continue to feel the pinch as most available stocks were bought when prices nearly trebled earlier this year after export curbs by countries from India to Vietnam. "Maybe by the end of the year, you will see prices at the local market easing, when the new stocks get out the warehouses into the local market," one dealer said.
<http://www.gulfinthemedial.com/index.php?lang=en&m=&id=422045>
Contact Reuters: +44 20 7542 9484
- **NPR Misses Real Story, Plants Wrong Seeds**, by Frances Moore-Lappe, *Huffington Post*, August 11, 2008
I depend a lot on NPR, so my heart sank as I listened to Morning Edition's [recent series](#) on the world hunger crisis. Using Honduras as its case study, the four-part series reinforces dangerous myths that actually block us from seeing the real solutions to hunger all around us. We're told that "across the globe [f]ood is expensive and there's not enough food to feed empty stomachs." No. In fact the world produces enough to make us all plump. True, today an estimated [100 million additional people](#) are, or will soon be, facing hunger as food prices exceed their budgets, but the deeper lack they're experiencing is not food itself. It is power.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/frances-moore-lappe/npr-misses-real-story-pla_b_117744.html

Relationship between food/fuel prices

- **Commodities slump won't mean lower food prices**, *International Herald Tribune*, August 20, 2008
As prices for crude oil and other commodities ease, Americans have gotten a small dose of relief at the gas pump. But don't expect less pain at the grocery counter. Food inflation is to stay — and will probably get worse for some things.
<http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2008/08/20/business/NA-US-Fickle-Food-Prices.php>
Contact International Herald Tribune: (33 1) 41 43 93 22

- ***Airlines push for homegrown jet fuel***, by Chris Kahn, *Washington Post/Associated Press*, August 15, 2008
With the price of oil still above \$100 a barrel, everything from wood chips to chicken fat is being scrutinized as an alternative to traditional fuel. But when it comes to airplanes, finding the right mix poses a special challenge.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/15/AR2008081502464.html>
Contact the Wall Street Journal: (212) 416-2000

Agriculture Development practices (corporate, IGO, NGO, gov't) with focus on South East Asia/Sub-Saharan Africa

- ***Tanzania: Funding Agriculture key to Prosperity***, *The Citizen (Dar es Salaam)/All Africa*, August 21, 2008
Africa's future prosperity hinges on its commitment to engage in robust exploitation of its farming to boost production. This is what the continent has the comparative advantage for and readily available resources.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200808210559.html>
- ***Water privitisation is a doomed exercise***, *Business Daily Africa*, August 20, 2008
The emergence of neo-liberal solutions to tackle water management problems that faced many local authorities in late 1990s was supposed to shield the consumers — especially the poor — from unnecessary increment of water charges. Any approved increase must take into account the poor who may have to grapple with decisions on whether to buy water or to buy food. That should never be allowed to happen.
http://www.bdafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9463&Itemid=5854
Contact Business Daily Africa: +254 20 328 8121
- ***Global Food Crisis may be Ending as Plantings Gain***, by Thomas Kutty Abraham and Pratik Parija, *Bloomberg News*, August 20, 2008
A worldwide food crisis that sent prices of wheat, rice and corn to records and sparked riots from Haiti to Ivory Coast may be over after farmers boosted plantings, a top official in India's food ministry said.
<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601091&sid=a12X6ZQJBD4o&refer=india>
- ***Global food crisis spurs Japan rice policy rethink***, by Miho Yoshikawa, *Reuters*, August 19, 2008
This spring, with some nations close to panic over global rice supplies, Japan confronted a different problem -- huge swathes of paddy fields lying fallow due to a 37-year-old price support policy that limits planting. Now, with the world more anxious about its future food sources than any time since the 1960s, some analysts and politicians say it's time for change.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/reutersEdge/idUST16141220080819>
Contact Reuters: +44 20 7542 9484
- ***Fund set up for farming research***, by Maureen Ongwae, *Business Daily Kenya*, August 19, 2008
A Sh1.8 billion kitty has been established to research on improved farming methods in the country. Industrialisation minister Henry Kosgey said sectors that would reap benefits from the research included cotton, sugar and horticulture.
http://www.bdafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9466&Itemid=5865

Contact Business Daily Africa: +254 20 328 8121

- **Millions eating food grown with polluted water, says UN report**, by John Vidal, *The Guardian*, August 18, 2008
At least 200 million people around the world risk their health daily by eating food grown using untreated waste water, some of which may be contaminated with heavy metals and raw sewage, according to major study of 53 world cities. Urban farmers in 80% of the cities surveyed were found to be using untreated waste water, but the study said they also provided vital food for burgeoning cities at a time of unprecedented water scarcity and the worst food crisis in 30 years.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/aug/18/water.waste>
- **Food crisis? Try rats, says Indian state government**, *Washington Post/Reuters*, August 18, 2008
A state government in eastern Indian is encouraging people to eat rats in an effort to battle soaring food prices and save grain stocks. Authorities in Bihar, one of India's poorest states, are asking rich and poor alike to switch to eating rats in a bid to reduce the dependence on rice. They even plan to offer rats on restaurant menus.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/19/AR2008081902002.html>
Contact the Wall Street Journal: (212) 416-2000
- **Bio-fortification might be key to global food crisis: IAEA**, *India Times*, August 16, 2008
In the backdrop of current global food crisis, Bio-fortification, a fairly new technique to improve nutrition through conventional plant breeding, was extensively discussed at meeting of scientists organised by the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/Economy/Bio-fortification_might_be_key_to_global_food_crisis_IAEA/articleshow/3370557.cms
- **Deere spent \$400K lobbying government in 2Q**, *Associated Press/Forbes*, August 14, 2008
Deere & Co. spent \$400,000 lobbying the federal government in the second quarter on farming legislation, fuel policy, climate change and trade issues, according to a recently filed report.
<http://www.forbes.com/feeds/ap/2008/08/14/ap5324312.html>
- **Sudan seeks \$1bn to put into agriculture**, by Andrew England and Barney Jopson, *Financial Times*, August 12, 2008
Sudan is seeking to attract at least \$1bn of capital for its agricultural sector from Arab and Asian investment groups, which are turning to Africa in search of new food supplies as their governments try to manage the impact of commodity price inflation.
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f1011e20-6805-11dd-8d3b-0000779fd18c.html>
Contact the Financial Times: +44 (0) 20 7873 3000

Small scale farms and agriculture productivity

- **Rollin' on the River**, by Nathan Blacckford, *TriState Media*, August 20, 2008
The unquestioned highlight of the cruise was the unique perspective of the river it provided. However, the trip was really intended to encourage support for river transportation, a major factor in how much money it takes to grow and transport corn and other crops.
<http://www.tristate-media.com/articles/2008/08/20/warricknews/news/01river.txt>

- ***The Poppy Trade***, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, September/October 2008
Soaring food prices have led to violent riots and swift setbacks in the global fight against poverty this year. But in Afghanistan, which has been hit particularly hard by the spike in wheat prices, a silver lining to the food crisis is emerging. The high price of wheat might be accomplishing something the international drug war never could: convincing Afghan farmers, who supply 90 percent of the world's opium, to abandon poppies for growing food.
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/users/login.php?story_id=4423&URL=http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4423
- ***Food for thought***, by Nantiya Tangwisutijit, *Bangkok Post*, August 16, 2008
Success of organically grown rice wins over farmers formerly keen on chemicals to boost crop yields.
http://www.bangkokpost.com/160808_News/16Aug2008_news93.php

Biofuels

- ***Bio-diesel is the best portable solution to our food and fuel crisis, shows NED expert***, *Daily Times (Pakistan)*, August 21, 2008
Bio-diesel is an environment friendly fuel, with far less emissions than mineral diesel fuel, and is the perfect solution for the food and fuel crisis, according to NED University of Engineering and Technology, Department of Environmental Engineering Co-Chairman Associate Prof. Dr Mohammed Harun.
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C08%5C21%5Cstory_21-8-2008_pg12_11
- ***US Senators optimistic about ethanol, ag futures***, *CNN Money/Associated Press*, August 18, 2008
A U.S. Senate committee hearing organized to address the ongoing food-versus-fuel debate over ethanol offered confidence to its organizers but left livestock producers troubled that their concerns weren't fully recognized. Sens. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, and Ben Nelson, D-Neb., took a largely defensive stand against those criticisms Monday during a special Senate Agriculture Committee hearing at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, saying they are optimistic about where ethanol production and renewable fuels are headed.
<http://money.cnn.com/news/newsfeeds/articles/apwire/8017cd780cf812d3a275299047eda7fc.htm>
- ***Heineman links ethanol to security***, by Leslie Reed, *Omaha World Herald*, August 14, 2008
Ethanol supporters attending a national conference in Omaha learned the latest Wednesday about new technologies that could allow fuel to be made from switch grass, sugar cane and even corncobs. But they continued to defend corn-based ethanol as a key component to reducing American dependence on gasoline. A perennial crop like switch grass or sugar cane reduced the amount of fuel needed to plant and till fields each year, making it more efficient to produce cellulosic ethanol, he said. Corncobs and switch grass are not used in food production and thus would not affect food prices.
http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u_page=1208&u_sid=10405541

- **Poet to make some U.S. cellulosic ethanol this year**, by Timothy Gardner, *Reuters*, August 13, 2008
Private U.S. ethanol company Poet on Wednesday said it will begin making a small amount of next generation ethanol later this year using crop waste, a feedstock that could yield the alternative motor fuel without inflating food prices. Poet, the country's top ethanol producer, has started building a cellulosic ethanol pilot plant in Scotland, South Dakota, that will be added to an existing plant that makes traditional ethanol
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUKN1344857920080813?sp=true>
Contact Reuters: +44 20 7542 9484
- **Ethanol industry improves product and PR efforts**, *CNN Money/Associated Press*, August 13, 2008
Ethanol producers on Wednesday railed against what they described as a smear campaign by opponents who have branded the industry responsible for rising food prices. "Today, we face strong opposition, and their weapon primarily is the press," Bob Scott, president of the American Coalition for Ethanol, told hundreds of producers gathered in Omaha for the group's trade show.
<http://money.cnn.com/news/newsfeeds/articles/apwire/7c27602f787a1c40f46bfdefde3d9994.htm>
- **5 Things you didn't know were Biofuels**, *The Huffington Post*, August 7, 2008
When talk turns to biofuels, it often soon turns to food shortages next. Biofuel doesn't have to be made from food staple crops, though.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/08/07/5-things-you-didnt-know-w_n_117522.html
- **Misplaced Priorities**, by Kiran Bhat, *Harvard International Review*, Spring 2008
The United States' funding of corn farmers stems largely from precedent, a desire to keep the heartland happy, and perhaps even a romanticized conception of small farmers. However, the subsidies also have significant roots in one of the most confounding environmental programs of the past 30 years: ethanol fuel.
<http://www.harvardir.org/articles/1740/>
- **Bio-fortification key to global food crisis?** *Times of India*, August 16, 2008
In the backdrop of current global food crisis, Bio-fortification, a fairly new technique to improve nutrition through conventional plant breeding, was extensively discussed at meeting of scientists organized by the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Earth/Bio-fortification_key_to_global_food_crisis/articleshow/3370852.cms
Contact the Times of India: 91- 124 - 418 7000

Food Aid

- **USAID Expedites Emergency Food Aid to Horn of Africa**, *USAID Press Release*, August 19, 2008
The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is expediting the shipment of nearly 24,000 metric tons (MT) of food aid to help the millions of people in need of assistance in the Horn of Africa.

<http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2008/pr080819.html>

- ***As food aid floods into Sudan, Khartoum reaps rich rewards from bumper crops in exports***, by Jeffrey Gettleman, *Scotsman*, August 17, 2008
EVEN as it receives desperately needed food aid from international donors, Sudan is growing and selling vast quantities of its own crops to other countries. The Khartoum regime is capitalising on high global food prices at a time when millions of people in its war-riddled region of Darfur barely have enough to eat.
<http://news.scotsman.com/latestnews/As-food-aid-floods-into.4398710.jp>
- ***Lutheran World Relief Announces \$150,000 Matching Grant to Fight Food Crisis***, *Market Watch*, August 15, 2008
Lutheran World Relief today announced a \$150,000 matching grant opportunity for gifts to its "Fill the Bowl" campaign to fight the global food crisis. Thanks to the generosity of Paul and Barbara Denton, of Easton, Md., donations to LWR's Fill the Bowl campaign will be matched dollar for dollar, until \$150,000 in matching funds is reached.
<http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/lutheran-world-relief-announces-150000/story.aspx?guid=%7B593DBACB-7DC8-4A3C-BC38-8EBE9D8F27E0%7D&dist=hppr>
- ***Central African Republic: World Bank Grant to Mitigate Food Crisis***, by Rachel McColgan-Arnold, *The World Bank Press Release*, August 14, 2008
A US\$7 million grant was approved today by the World Bank to finance activities to mitigate the impact of rising food prices in the Central African Republic as a result of rising global food prices. In a country where two-thirds of the population lives below the poverty line, and where food prices have risen by an average of 25 percent in the first third of this year alone, this project will provide critical assistance to alleviate some of the pressure from the escalation of food prices.
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21873381~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>
- ***World Food Program Donor List Reveals Oil-Rich Nations Remain Frugal***, by George Russell, *Fox News*, August 13, 2008
Three months after U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened a task force on the global food crisis, the world's richest oil-exporting nations remain among the biggest food-aid cheapskates. Donor lists obtained from the World Food Program, the United Nations' food aid arm, show that Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela have contributed little or nothing to WFP's coffers, even after Ban's emergency appeal. At the same time, sky-high oil prices and imbalances exacerbated by swollen oil revenues have continued to worsen the food crisis.
<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,403182,00.html>

Market Access

- ***Envoy: US support for trade deal won't fade***, *International Herald Tribune*, August 20, 2008
While the trade talks have stumbled repeatedly in the last seven years, July's failure was perhaps the most devastating. Faced with global unrest from rising food prices, credit problems from shaky financial markets and the threat of economic downturn, negotiators hoped a deal on farm and manufacturing trade would help alleviate these problems.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/08/20/business/EU-WTO-US-Trade-Hopes.php>

- **Statement of World Bank Group President Robert B. Zoellick on Doha WTO Negotiations**, *World Bank Press Release*, August 18, 2008
As the dust settles from the breakdown of the WTO negotiations in Geneva, some parties are recognizing that there was a good package of results left on the table. It would be a mistake for the world economy and harmful for developing countries not to retrieve it. President Lula of Brazil has called on the parties not to let the WTO negotiations fail because of differences over a special safeguard for agriculture. He is right. Given the high food prices around the world and the need for poor people to lower their cost of food, it just does not make sense for the Doha negotiations to founder upon this barrier.
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21874660~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>
- **Food Security Takes Precedence over Global Free Trade**, by Benjamin Gisin, *TriState Observer*, August 14, 2008
At the heart of the issue is that global free trade, under World Trade Organization protocols, limits what a nation can do to protect its farmers and national food production. The practice of limiting agricultural imports, in an effort to protect a nation's farmers, is something the WTO wants to eliminate. It is not that farmers don't deserve better prices for feeding us, the question is about how its done. And global free-trade got a failing grade from many nations for its performance during the recent global food crisis.
<http://www.tristateobserver.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=10359>
- **Lula, Gordon Brown agree on reviving Doha Round**, *Xinhua*, August 13, 2008
Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown agreed Wednesday on the possibility of saving the Doha Round of World Trade Organization (WTO) talks, official sources from the Brazilian presidential office said. On Tuesday, the Brazilian president discussed the issue with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, when he proposed a joint effort to renew the negotiations in September.
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-08/14/content_9290128.htm
- **US Family Farmers Applaud Demise of Doha Negotiations**, by Irene Lin, *National Family Farm Coalition*, August 14, 2008
The National Family Farm Coalition welcomed with elation the recent failure of the Doha Round negotiations at the World Trade Organization in Geneva. NFFC, an organization representing family farmers in the United States and a member of Via Campesina, an international coalition of family farmers, peasants, and farm workers, has been at the forefront since 1993 of protesting the disastrous inclusion of agriculture in the world trading system.
<http://www.commondreams.org/news2008/0814-06.htm>
- **Negotiations can find compromise on the safeguards issue—Lamy**, *World Trade Organization Speeches*, August 13, 2008
Director-General Pascal Lamy, in his remarks on the second day of the “Global Partnership for Development” conference in New Delhi on 13 August 2008, said that the Doha Round should not collapse over the issue of the special safeguard mechanism in agriculture for developing

countries. “A fine balance is required and the search for this fine balance requires that our negotiating resources continue at work,” he added.

http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/sppl_e/sppl98_e.htm

- **Export Boom helps Farms, but not American Factories**, by Louis Uchitelle, *New York Times*, August 18, 2008

Exports are the bright spot this year in an otherwise bleak economy. But the world is not suddenly snapping up made-in-America goods like aircraft, machinery and staplers. The great attraction is decidedly low-luster commodities like corn, wheat, ore and scrap metal. “What amazes me,” said Robert L. Thompson, an agriculture specialist at the [University of Illinois](#), “is that we have been able to greatly increase corn exports while also using it for ethanol. Only by increasing the acreage devoted to corn have we been able to do this, and by squeezing down the use of corn for domestic livestock feed.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/18/business/economy/18export.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&ref=business&pagewanted=print&adxnnlx=1219050305-4/9uWA6tull75Y72yJ8K0w&oref=slogin

Contact the New York Times: 212-556-1234

The Food Crisis and Poverty

- **Starvation Spurs Exodus to India**, by Shakti Kumar Pun and Rabindra Shahi, *The Himalayan Times*, August 21, 2008

Stung by an acute food shortage, people of remote village development committees of Rukum district have left for India to make a living. Sayalakhad, Ranmamaikot, Kankri, Kol, Sisne, Dang and Pwang VDCs are witnessing a mass exodus. The food crisis has emerged after the Rukum office of Nepal Food Corporation failed to distribute food grains to locals.

<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullstory.asp?filename=aFanata0va3qzpc9a8a5qa.axamal&folder=aHaoamW&Name=Home&dtSiteDate=20080821>

Developments in Agriculture, Science and Technology

- **An Advocate for Science Diplomacy**, by Claudia Dreifus, *New York Times*, August 18, 2008

Nina V. Fedoroff, 66, defied odds and conventionality by working her way through college, graduate school and postdoctoral studies. Dr. Fedoroff, a member of the National Academy of Sciences, did fundamental research on plant transposons, or jumping genes, and was among the first to clone plant DNA. She is science adviser to the secretary of state and administrator of the Agency for International Development. We spoke last month in Washington and later on the telephone. An edited version of the conversations on genetically modified foods and national policy follows.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/19/science/19conv.html?ex=1219809600&en=07e88becde684da6&ei=5070&emc=eta1>

Contact the New York Times: 212-556-1234

- **Corn-Phone**, *New York Times Editorial*, August 16, 2008

Samsung has announced the latest model in its lineup of “eco-phones” — one of the dozens of new electronics products from manufacturers striving to be green. Samsung says the new phone is made in ways that cut down on the use of environmentally harmful materials and is packaged in recycled materials. But what really makes this model different is that its case is made of bioplastic — with materials extracted from corn. Bioplastic also creates another market for corn

— a much smaller market than the ethanol market, but growing nonetheless. New industrial demands for corn are driving up world food prices and are increasing the pressure to convert more nonagricultural land to corn production.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/16/opinion/16sat3.html?adxnnlx=1218899465-z9Zm0%2051/GwSXsrHwpFaQQ&pagewanted=print>