

GLOBAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE WEEKLY NEWS BRIEF OF THE GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



February 18th – February 24th, 2012

Quote of the Week: *“Food security is about national security. There are too many people in the world, with this abundance, who are starving. And we struggle to get them food because of political instability that is generated by that chaotic situation. Somehow, we have got to lead the world in that effort and we have got to make the case that really food security is national security issue.”* - Senator Mike Johanns, 2012 USDA Outlook Forum, February 23, 2012.

For more information:

- The [Global Food for Thought Blog](#) provides expert commentary, debate, and updates on key developments in real time.
- Background information on the Global Agricultural Development Initiative, and previous editions of *Global Food for Thought*, can be found on the Initiative’s website: www.thechicagocouncil.org/globalagdevelopment.
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KEY ARTICLES AND REPORTS

Bill Gates to UN: Find New Ways to Help Poor Farmers; Announces \$200 Million in Grants, *Washington Post, February 23*

Current approaches to global agriculture are outdated, inefficient and don’t give small farmers in poor countries the help they really need, Bill Gates told U.N. food agencies as he announced nearly \$200 million in grants. Much of some \$2 billion spent over the past five years to fight poverty and hunger in Africa and Asia by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has gone toward improving agricultural productivity. Gates urged the

U.N. agencies to commit to measurable targets for increasing agricultural productivity.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/bill-gates-to-un-find-new-ways-to-help-poor-farmers-announces-200-million-in-grants/2012/02/23/gIQA4tlvUR_story.html

SEE ALSO: Working Together for Small Farmers, *Opinion, Bill Gates, Impatient Optimists Blog, February 23*

Most extremely poor people in the developing world get their food and income from farming small plots of land. Many others live in big cities and need access to inexpensive food to be healthy and productive. So helping small farmers grow more food sustainably is the best way to fight hunger and poverty over the long term. In the past several decades, agricultural yields in many places have doubled, and hunger and poverty have been cut in half. Now it is time to continue and accelerate that progress.

<http://www.impatientoptimists.org/Posts/2012/02/Feeding-the-Farmers-Feeding-the-World>

How Do You Solve a Problem like Somalia? *The Economist, February 23*

In order for Somalia to have any chance of making a cantonal arrangement of six or seven regions work, it must first get some important things right. Donors can play their part by coughing up cash and trying to make sure it is spent correctly, but Somalis have to do much better than they have done so far. For Baobab, the main challenges can be broken down into security, food and business.

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/baobab/2012/02/somalia>

SEE ALSO: Nations Pledge Help, Demand Progress in Somalia, *David Stringer, MSNBC, February 23*

Nations pledged new funding, additional training for soldiers and coast guards, increased cooperation over terrorism and a new drive to root out those who finance and profit from piracy, after the shipping industry paid out \$135 million in ransoms last year.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46498819>

Lower Global Crop Prices to Ease Food Inflation-USDA, *Charles Abbott, Bloomberg, February 23*

Global crop prices will retreat sharply this year as farmers around the world expand production, bringing stability back to commodity markets and easing food inflation fears, the U.S. government forecast on Thursday. After two years of razor thin stocks, world crop supplies, led by wheat, are recovering.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/23/us-usa-agriculture-idUSTRE81M1E020120223>

SEE ALSO: USDA Still Sees 2012 Food Prices Rising 2.5%-3.5%, *Ian Berry, Wall Street Journal, February 23*

The U.S. government left its food-price-inflation outlook for 2012 unchanged at 2.5% to 3.5% in a monthly forecast released Thursday. The projected increase for all food would be down from 2011 food inflation of 3.7%. The 2012 forecast projects the price of food from grocery stores will climb 2.5% to 3.5%, while consumers eating out will see prices climb 2% to 3%, both unchanged from last month.

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/usda-still-sees-2012-food-prices-rising-25-35-2012-02-23>

Genetically Modified Crops to Get Faster Approval, USDA Says, *Jack Kaskey, Bloomberg, February 23*

Seed companies including Monsanto Co., the world's largest, will get speedier regulatory reviews of their genetically modified crops under forthcoming rule changes, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said. The goal is to cut by half the time needed to approve biotech crops from the current average of three years. Approvals that took six months in the 1990s have lengthened because of increased public interest, more legal challenges and the advent of national organic food standards.

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-02-23/genetically-modified-crops-to-get-faster-approval-usda-says.html>

Smart Agriculture to Help World's Poor, *Business Report, February 22*

Agriculture needed new technologies and innovations as well as bold leadership as developing nations look towards an era of climate smart agriculture. This would meet the needs of the huge number of people that suffer from poverty in rural areas across the globe. Experts from IFAD said that there was a satisfactory degree of agricultural success in developing nations but much still needed to be done as small holder farmers remained vulnerable to forces of climate change, lack of market access and under investment.

<http://www.iol.co.za/business/business-news/smart-agriculture-to-help-world-s-poor-1.1240476>

Interview with USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, PBS, February 17

Working with communities of faith means “helping millions of Americans connect to the opportunity to serve vulnerable populations abroad.” Watch excerpts from Kim Lawton’s edited interview with USAID administrator Rajiv Shah.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/february-17-2012/usaaid-administrator-rajiv-shah/10313/>

Job Announcement: Head of Media Outreach, IFPRI

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) seeks a Head of Media Outreach for its Communications Division. The successful candidate will develop and manage strategies to generate media coverage of IFPRI and its research, and conduct communications outreach activities aimed at the Institute’s key audiences. This position is an exempt, two-year, fixed-term, renewable appointment based in Washington, DC.

<http://careers.ifpri.org/detail.asp?jobid=ifpri11-209>

RELEVANT U.S. ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Secretary Clinton’s Remarks: Intervention at the London Conference on Somalia, U.S. State Department, February 23

The US announced that the famine that killed tens of thousands of Somalis and displaced tens of thousands more has ended – though food security remains a serious concern. Now we must keep the pressure on al-Shabaab so that its grip on Somalia continues to weaken. The UN Security Council’s vote on Wednesday to increase AMISOM’s troop ceiling by nearly half and expand its mandate significantly is an excellent step.

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2012/02/184493.htm>

SEE ALSO: VIDEO: Cameron and Clinton address Somalia conference in London

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2012/feb/23/cameron-clinton-somalia-london-video>

Moving Agriculture Forward USDA – Growing, Innovating, and Celebrating 150 Years, U.S. Department of Agriculture, February 23

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack kicked off the commemoration of the department’s 150th anniversary today at USDA’s 2012 Agricultural Outlook Forum titled “Moving Agriculture Forward” with dynamic presenters and panelists who discussed issues impacting agriculture in 2012 and beyond. To commemorate USDA’s rich history as well as its potential, Secretary Vilsack moderated a panel discussion with former Secretaries of Agriculture Ed Schafer, Mike Johanns, Ann Veneman, Dan Glickman, Mike Espy, Clayton Yeutter, John Block, and Bob Bergland.

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2012/02/0066.xml&>

SEE ALSO: PANEL 1 Video

<http://mfile3.akamai.com/88068/wmv/ocbmtcmmedia.download.akamai.com/88068/outlook/panel01.asx>

SEE ALSO: PANEL 2 Video

<http://mfile3.akamai.com/88068/wmv/ocbmtcmmedia.download.akamai.com/88068/outlook/panel2.asx>

SEE ALSO: “Abraham Lincoln” Video

<http://mfile3.akamai.com/88068/wmv/ocbmtcmmedia.download.akamai.com/88068/outlook/Lincoln1.asx>

Bridging the Gap on Agricultural Research and Developing with the Private Sector, Opinion, Catherine Woteki, USDA, February 23

Agricultural research and development are necessary to raise productivity to meet this expected demand. Bridging the productivity gap will require robust investment from the public and private sectors. The Global Harvest Initiative’s policy report points to an \$89 billion gap in annual agricultural investment in developing countries. In recent decades, the private sector has become a major investor in agricultural research and development, and a significant source of innovations.

<http://blogs.usda.gov/2012/02/23/bridging-the-gap-on-agricultural-research-and-developing-with-the-private-sector/>

Secretary Clinton's Keynote Address at Global Business Conference, *U.S. State Department, February 21*
We fundamentally believe that increasing trade and growing prosperity will benefit not just our own people, but people everywhere. Our economies are interdependent as never before, and so are our fates. America's economic renewal depends to a large degree on the strength of the global economy, and the global economy depends on the strength of America.

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2012/02/184284.htm>

We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces Steps to Boost the Rural Economy, Promote Job Creation, *The White House, February 21*

As part of the Obama Administration's "We Can't Wait" efforts to strengthen the economy, create jobs and support business growth, Administration officials announced three significant actions to expand the government's purchase of biobased products, promote regional rural job creation efforts, and develop a rural healthcare workforce, all of which build on the historic investments the Administration has made in rural America over the past three years.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/02/21/we-can-t-wait-obama-administration-announces-steps-boost-rural-economy-p>

SEE ALSO: Government to Buy More Bio-based Products, *Wendy Koch, USA Today, February 21*

Obama is scheduled to sign a presidential memo that requires the federal government to track and increase its purchases of products made from plants and other renewable agricultural materials - products such as hand soap derived from soybeans, furniture from sunflower hull wood or disposable spoons from potatoes. Obama is directing him to increase by 50%, within a year, the number of eligible products - now about 9,000.

<http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/environment/story/2012-02-21/biobased-products-government-boost/53181882/1>

Using Diplomacy to Create Jobs, *Opinion, Thomas R. Nides, Politico, February 19*

Our diplomats, trade negotiators, agricultural experts, and commercial service officers have worked hard to make sure that American companies get a fair shake wherever they operate. America's economic renewal depends on the strength of the global economy - and the global economy depends on the strength of the American economy. In this increasingly interconnected and dynamic world, we must work together - whether businesspeople or diplomats, Americans or our international friends - to advance our shared prosperity.

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0212/73064.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Release of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

Date: February 28, 2012

Location: United Nations Headquarters, New York, NY

The "Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index" (WEAI), will be launched at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The WEAI is the first ever measure to directly capture women's empowerment and inclusion levels in the agricultural sector. Women play a critical role in agricultural growth in developing countries. Yet they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints, limiting further inclusion in the sector.

<http://www.usaid.gov/press/mediaadvisories/2012/ma120222.html>

Girls Grow: A Vital Force in Rural Economies with the project chair, Catherine Bertini

Date: March 1, 2012

Location: The Church Center for the United Nations, New York, NY

Some of the most marginalized adolescent girls in the world live in rural areas. When an adolescent girl is educated, healthy, skilled, and empowered, she can reach incredible heights and become a pillar in her

society. She is more likely to tap into her full potential and invest in her family, community, and beyond. This panel will explore how empowering rural adolescent girls spurs economic and social growth and how to best address the triple disadvantages of location, age, and gender unique to rural adolescent girls. Please direct all questions to: events@unfoundation.org

4th Annual International Women's Day Breakfast

Date: March 1, 2012

Location: Washington, D.C.

Women Thrive and Honorary Co-Chairs Senator John Kerry, Representative Ted Poe, and Representative Jan Schakowsky invite you to join us to celebrate International Women's Day. From One in Three to None in Three: Women and Girls Living Free of Violence.

<http://www.womenthrive.org/images//invite020112ngo.jpg>

Effective Solutions for Agricultural Development through Empowered African Women Scientist

Date: March 7, 2012

Location: London, U.K.

African women farmers and agricultural scientists make essential contributions to agriculture and can do so much more to help drive agricultural growth and tackle hunger in SSA - but they must be fully engaged. If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent, raising agricultural output and reducing the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17 percent.

http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/newsandeventspggrp/imperialcollege/centres/africanagriculturaldevelopment/newssummary/news_2-2-2012-14-35-23

Submit a Proposal to Present at Cracking the Nut 2012: Attracting Private Sector Investment to Rural and Agricultural Markets

Date: March 7, 2012

Location: Global

Cracking the Nut 2012 is scouring the globe to find the latest innovations on leveraging public private partnerships to develop rural and agricultural markets. Do you - or someone you know - have insightful experience to help push the frontier of rural and agricultural market development? [Submit a proposal](#) and your approach could be selected among the best of the best to present at Cracking the Nut 2012.

<http://www.crackingthenutconference.com/call-for-proposals.html>

World Biofuels Markets

Date: March 13th - 15th, 2012

Location: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Over 250 biofuels thought leaders will share their experiences and expertise on all aspects of the biofuels value chain during three days of interactive conference sessions.

<http://www.worldbiofuelsmarkets.com/>

Jobs, Food & Farming

Date: March 19-21, 2012

Location: Accra, Ghana

The conference will critically examine, from both research and policy perspectives: 1) Dominant and alternative framings and narratives, and recent empirical data, relating to how young people engage with the agri-food sector in Africa; 2) The dynamics of change in different components of the agri-food sector and the implications of these dynamics for young people; 3) The implications for young people of alternative policy approaches to the development of the agri-food sector.

<http://www.future-agricultures.org/index.php>

CropLife America and RISE Spring Conference 2012

Date: April 5-6, 2012

Location: Washington, D.C.

Our 2012 conference will delve into key fields such as NPDES permitting, spray drift, the Endocrine Disruptor

Screening Program and pesticide registration, as well as broader issues such as the important role of precision agriculture.

<http://www.croplifeamerica.org/CLA-RISE-Spring-Conference-2012>

Sustaining the L'Aquila Commitments

The 3rd Annual Symposium on Global Agriculture and Food Security

Date: April 26, 2012

Location: Washington, D.C.

The 2012 event will bring together leaders from the U.S. government, international organizations, private sector, academia, and civil society three weeks before the G8 Summit in Chicago, under the theme *Sustaining the L'Aquila Commitments*. The symposium will invite participants to push the needle on how the U.S. and international community can renew and broaden its commitment to alleviating poverty and hunger and advancing economic growth and stability through global agricultural development.

http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/globalagdevelopment/gad/Events/gad/Events/2012/Annual_Symposium.aspx

2012 National Policy Conference

Date: May 16, 2012

Location: Washington, D.C.

CropLife America's 3rd Annual National Policy Conference will bring together leading experts, academics and politicians to engage in a debate on the development of 2012 Farm Bill. How does Congress design a Farm Bill that addresses human, social, economic, research and environmental needs while taking into account farmers, consumers and the natural systems that give us the food and fiber we need to live?

<http://www.croplifeamerica.org/National-Policy-Conference-2012>

Cracking the Nut: Attracting Private Sector Investment to Rural and Agricultural Markets

Date: June 25-26, 2012

Location: Washington, DC

The Cracking the Nut 2012 Conference is the premier global event to exclusively focus on leveraging public private partnerships to develop rural and agricultural markets and help you identify investment opportunities at all points of the agricultural supply chain. Agriculture is poised for unparalleled global growth, based on soaring population rates and rising living standards. To sustain this larger, more urban population, food production will need to double by 2050 in order to satisfy demand? Are you ready for these changing market realities?

<http://www.crackingthenutconference.com>

SPECIAL COVERAGE: 2012 IFAD GOVERNING COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

Bill Gates Calls for More Accountability on Food Programs, Justin Gillis, New York Times, February 23

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has brought a distinctive approach to problems of global development: a sense of urgency, a willingness to make big investments in pursuit of ambitious targets, and — above all — a hard-nosed insistence on results that can be counted and documented. Now Mr. Gates is calling for a stringent application of that approach in the field of global agriculture. In a speech Thursday morning in Rome, he called on the UN agencies that deal with world food supply to set a global target for the productivity growth of agriculture.

<http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/23/bill-gates-calls-for-more-accountability-on-food-programs/>

SEE ALSO: Bill Gates Calls International Response to Helping Poor Farmers Outdated and Inefficient, Outlines Changes Needed to Feed 1 Billion Hungry, Wall Street Journal, February 23

Bill Gates told the international agricultural community it had fallen short of delivering the help small farmers in developing countries need, when they need it. Gates asked the UN bodies responsible for fighting hunger and poverty to unite around a common global target for sustainable productivity growth to guide and measure their efforts.

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/bill-gates-calls-international-response-to-helping-poor-farmers-outdated-and-inefficient-outlines-changes-needed-to-feed-1-billion-hungry-2012-02-23>

SEE ALSO: Gates Attacks 'Outdated' UN Food Agencies, *Financial Times, February 23*

The UN has three agencies devoted to food security with a combined annual budget of roughly \$4.5bn: the FAO, founded in 1945; the WFP, created in 1961, and the IFAD, founded in 1977.

Although the three are based in Rome, they act largely as independent entities with little interaction. Mr. Gates, who has donated roughly \$2bn to food security in the past decade and plans to give another \$2bn in the next five years, told an audience of the three agencies in Rome that the current system was "outdated and inefficient".

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/629f3e52-5e45-11e1-85f6-00144feabdc0.html>

UN Official Urges Focus on Rural Development to Lift Millions out of Poverty, *UN News Center, February 22*

A top UN official committed to pull up to 90 million people out of poverty by 2015 and help small farmers and all those in rural areas to realize their potential in eliminating hunger and promoting development.

"Smallholder farmers can feed themselves and they can help feed the world," Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of the IFAD, said. Mr. Nwanze noted that agriculture is a growth industry.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41328&Cr=ifad&Cr1>

Rwanda's Kagame calls for IFAD's Member States to "Be Bold", *IFAD, February 22*

The theme of the meeting is sustainable smallholder agriculture. Small farms support 2 billion people. They provide up to 80 per cent of the available food in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia. IFAD-supported projects help farmers deal with the effects of climate change and an already degraded environment, and transfer knowledge of "climate-smart" agricultural techniques to support improved productivity while protecting the environment.

<http://www.ifad.org/media/press/2012/15.htm>

No Global Security without a Thriving World Agriculture Sector, says Italian Prime Minister, *IFAD, February 22*

In an insightful keynote address at the IFAD annual meeting, Mario Monti, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, underscored the relationships between food security, global security and the future of the planet. "A hungry world is an unjust world," Monti said. "It is also an unstable world." He added that "the right of every individual to a healthy and nutritious diet must be guaranteed."

<http://www.ifad.org/media/press/2012/14.htm>

A New Chapter: IFAD and the Gates Foundation on Sustainable Agriculture, *Opinion, Kevin Cleaver, Impatient Optimists, February 22*

Agriculture must be a top priority as the global population climbs toward a projected peak of 9 billion by 2050. To meet the world's need for 60 per cent more available food, farmers will have to increase crop yields on a limited quantity of arable land. And they'll have to do this sustainably, while adapting to the insidious effects of climate change. Technology is key.

<http://www.impatientoptimists.org/Posts/2012/02/A-New-Chapter-IFAD-and-the-Gates-Foundation-Step-Up-Collaboration-on-Sustainable-Agriculture>

Leaders Convene at UN Farmers' Forum to Tackle Climate Change Challenges, *UN News Centre, February 21*

Representatives of the millions of smallholders, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers around the world have agreed at a UN forum in Rome on the need to jointly address the global challenges of food insecurity and climate change. This year's meeting focuses on the links between overcoming poverty and food insecurity, and improving sustainable agriculture development.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41316&Cr=&Cr1>

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

Media Articles:

Kenya Makes Strides in Regulation of Biotechnology, *Xinhua, February 23*

Kenya is among countries in Africa that has made steady progress in adoption and regulation of biotechnology to boost crop production and enhance food sufficiency. Dr Clive James, chairperson of International Service for Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) noted that Kenya has made great progress in coming up with biotechnology crops, key among them cotton.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/sci/2012-02/23/c_131427086.htm

Experts Stress Need for Crop Adequate Research in Pacific Region, *Xinhua, February 23*

Experts for Pacific agriculture stressed the need for crop adequate research in the region, saying the previous attempts to intensify production of crops in the Pacific have not included adequate research and development. The important areas that have been overlooked include identification of well-adapted varieties, development of locally relevant sustainable production technologies and serious threats to health and the environment.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-02/23/c_131427862.htm

Keeping Traces of Antibiotics Out of Food, *Emilio Godoy, IPS, February 22*

Orange juice and beef form part of the diet of many people in Mexico and other countries of the Americas. But the traces of antibiotics and fungicides they can pose risks to human health, and authorities in the region have begun to address the problem. The FDA urged the industry to make sure that foreign suppliers refrain from using carbendazim on orange crops.

<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=106853>

National Guard to Train Afghans on Agriculture, *The Green Bay News Gazette, February 21*

A newly formed unit of the Wisconsin National Guard soon will deliver Dairy State know-how to war-torn Afghanistan. As Afghans become better able to produce more food, they will be less likely to grow poppies for opium or be recruited into the forces that have been battling the government and U.S. troops.

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/article/20120221/GPG03/202210422/National-Guard-train-Afghans-agriculture>

New Math Hubs to Boost Technology and Development in Africa, *Divine Ntarylke, VOA News, February 17*

The campus in Mbour, Senegal was opened in September and is now educating its first class of students. It's a branch of the Cape Town, South Africa-based African Institute for Mathematical Sciences, or AIMS, which has been working to address these issues since 2003. At the end of this year, students will be awarded a diploma that will enable them to further their studies at universities and research centers and work in industries throughout Africa.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/west/New-Math-Hubs-to-Boost-Technology-and-Development-in-Africa---139524528.html>

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

Reports:

Accelerating Equitable Achievement of the MDGs, *Asian Development Bank, February 2012*

The Asia-Pacific region has more than 60 percent of global population. Strong achievement in the region, whether in poverty reduction, or in education, or health, or environmental protection will inevitably bolster the global averages. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to two-thirds of the world's poor: 1.8 billion people who live on less than \$2 a day, with 903 million struggling on less than \$1.25 a day.

<http://www.asianscientist.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/MDG-Report2011-12.pdf>

SEE ALSO: South Asia Doing Worst on U.N. Development Goals - ADB official, *Reuters, February 19*

Such South Asian nations as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have already achieved or are on track to eliminate gender inequality in primary and secondary education as well as halt the spread of tuberculosis, said the report. But many of these countries are unlikely to meet 2015 targets on reducing hunger, under age-five mortality and expanding access to safe drinking water and

sanitation.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/02/19/sasia-goals-idINDEE81102L20120219>

SEE ALSO: Asia-Pacific Makes Big Gains Against Poverty, Lags on Hunger and Child Deaths, UN News Center, February 17

At the present rate of progress, the region as a whole is unlikely to meet MDGs related to eradicating hunger, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, among others, the report warns.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41272&Cr=Asia&Cr1=Pacific>

Media Articles:

Brazil to Fund Food Purchasing in Five African Countries, FAO, February 21

The Government of Brazil is providing \$2 375 000 for a new local food purchase programme to be set up by FAO and the WFP to benefit farmers and vulnerable populations in five African countries – Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal. FAO, which is to receive \$1.55 million, will look after the production side of the new project, providing seeds and fertilizer and boosting the capacity of small-scale farmers and farmers' associations to grow, process and sell their produce.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41308&Cr=FAO&Cr1>

Cameron Warns World Security Rests on Somalia's Future, Faith Karimi and Moni Basu, CNN, February 23

David Cameron urged the international community to help Somalia's feeble government tackle piracy, militants and hunger. Otherwise, he said, the world risks terror threats from the troubled African nation. However, Amnesty International said the conference failed adequately to address a "dire human rights situation" in Somalia.

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/23/world/africa/somalia-global-conference/index.html>

SEE ALSO: World Leaders Are Meeting in a Script All Too Familiar to Somalis, Jeffrey Gettleman, New York Times, February 22

Foreign policy heavyweights will gather in London and spend about six hours trying to solve a problem that has bedeviled this forlorn country for more than 20 years: establishing a functional government. But here on the ground, in scorching-hot Somali villages like Tabda, where people live in twig huts and stagger from shady spot to shady spot to avoid the wrath of the sun, there is laughing disbelief that any conference 4,000 miles away will solve anything.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/23/world/africa/world-leaders-meeting-in-london-to-discuss-somalia.html>

Kenya Army says Somali Militants Causing Food Crisis by Blocking Trade in Southern Somalia,

Washington Post, February 22

Officials said Somalia's south is now in the beginning stages of a humanitarian crisis because its residents are not getting the needed supplies, and they urged more relief agencies to step in. The Kenyan army blames al-Shabab for the blockage, and says that it is also slowing the army's advance toward Kismayo. Instead of fighting forward against the militants, troops are delivering food aid to those in need in an attempt to win favor in areas that were controlled by al-Shabab until recently.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/kenya-army-says-somali-militants-causing-food-crisis-by-blocking-trade-in-southern-somalia/2012/02/21/gIQAADCzLRR_story.html

Yemen's Instability Could be Fixed by Food Aid, The Examiner, February 20

Yemen is in the midst of a humanitarian disaster and little is being done to heed the warnings. Already the poorest country in the Middle East, Yemen has child malnutrition rates that rival famine-ravaged Somalia. UNICEF is trying to provide plumpy'nut, a special peanut paste to save Yemeni children from potentially deadly malnutrition. However, low funding prevents them from reaching the vast majority of mouths.

<http://www.examiner.com/global-hunger-in-national/yemen-s-instability-could-be-fixed-by-food-aid>

Nigeria: MDGs - The Niger State Example, Opinion, Danladi Ndayebo, AllAfrica, February 20

As part of efforts aimed at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, government has scaled up investments in the agricultural sector through direct support and enabling policy environment to promote private sector

participation in agriculture. This is to meet the target of ensuring food security and poverty eradication. Farmers receive targeted incentives and support in form of subsidized fertilizer, improved seeds, crop protection products, farm inputs and training in new technologies of improving farm outputs.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201202211089.html>

Ghana: Food Is a Human Right, *Angelique Van Der Made, AllAfrica, February 20*

Ghana is on track to meeting the MDG target of halving the percentage of its population who are hungry by 2015. The right to food is also a human right of every Ghanaian and every other person in the world, and national governments have a legal obligation to realize this right. By putting in place policies and laws which implement and protect the right to food, governments can make a good first step on the way to full realization of the right to food.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201202211207.html>

UN Votes to Increase Somalia Peacekeeping Force, *Guardian, February 22*

The UN security council has voted to increase an AU peacekeeping force to nearly 18,000 troops in a bid to defeat extremist rebels and help stabilize the country after more than two decades of chaos.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/22/somalia-un-peacekeeping-force>

Development Budget Nuggets and Some Cautions, *Opinion, Connie Veillette, Center for Global Development Blog, February 14*

The international affairs budget comes in at \$56 billion, an increase of \$1.3 billion or 2.4 percent more than 2012. Foreign Operations, where the aid accounts are funded, would be allocated pretty much the same as the previous year — \$36.2 billion compared to \$36.1 billion in 2012.

<http://blogs.cgdev.org/mca-monitor/2012/02/development-budget-nuggets-and-some-cautions.php>

ENVIRONMENT (WATER/CLIMATE)

Reports:

Three-Quarters of "Breadbasket" Is Drylands, *IPS, February 22*

In the book "Pobreza, desertificación y degradación de tierras" (Poverty, Desertification and Land Degradation), published by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the regional U.N. agency reports that 25 percent of land in the region is drylands, most of it degraded. The report says that, in order to maintain or improve its position as one of the world's leading exporters of food, Argentina should use its technical capabilities to design sustainable management systems for its drylands.

<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=106850>

SEE ALSO: FULL REPORT, Poverty, Desertification and Land Degradation

[http://www.eclac.org/cgi-](http://www.eclac.org/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/8/24268/P24268.xml&xsl=/ddpe/tpl/p9f.xsl)

[bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/8/24268/P24268.xml&xsl=/ddpe/tpl/p9f.xsl](http://www.eclac.org/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/8/24268/P24268.xml&xsl=/ddpe/tpl/p9f.xsl)

Media Articles:

Mango Pits, Coconut Shells Could Generate Electricity, *VOA News, February 22*

More than 1.5 billion people don't have access to electricity. That means, among other things, that school children with homework to do are left in the dark. But some poor, rural areas that lack electricity may find they can generate it from something many do have plenty of: coconut shells and fruit pits. University of Kentucky plant scientist Seth DeBolt and colleagues wanted to find a fuel that people in poor, rural areas could use to generate electricity.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/environment/Coconut-Shells-Could-Power-Poverty-Stricken-Areas--140004493.html>

Texas Agency likely to cut Water to Rice Farms Amid one of Worst Droughts in State History, *Associated Press, February 21*

Thousands of farmers in Texas' rice-producing region are likely to be affected by action taken in response to

one of the most severe droughts in state history. Texas usually produces about 5 percent of the nation's rice. Production also is dropping this year in the other five major rice-growing states, including No. 1 Arkansas, as farmers are pressed by rising production costs and dropping prices.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/industries/texas-agency-likely-to-cut-water-to-rice-farms-amid-one-of-worst-droughts-in-state-history/2012/02/21/gIQAfXXiQR_story.html

Focus on the Food: The Middle East Looks To Sustainability for Answers, *Opinion, James Doran, Huffington Post, February 21*

The problem of population growth and food supply is global. But there are elements of this global problem that are unique to the Middle East. This region and North Africa already import about 90 percent of all their food. The UAE has taken up that challenge, investing in agricultural land all over the world, from Sudan to Macedonia. It is clear we also need to embrace technology to enable us to double or triple food production to meet our needs.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-doran/focus-on-the-food-the-mid b 1292354.html>

Warning of Hosepipe Bans as Drought Declared, *Financial Times, February 20*

Large areas of south-east and central England were declared in drought as Caroline Spelman, environment secretary, warned households to expect early restrictions on water use, including hosepipe bans in the worst-affected areas. Low water levels and restrictions on water abstraction for agriculture set by the Environment Agency also threaten levels of permitted crop irrigation and output by farmers this summer.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/8428b06c-5be3-11e1-bbc4-00144feabdc0.html>

SEE ALSO: Drought May Be New Norm for UK, Says Environment Secretary, *Guardian, February 21*

Drought may now be the new norm for the UK, and drastic measures including growing genetically modified crops will be considered as part of the solution, the environment secretary said. Households across the south-east are likely to face water usage restrictions this spring, she warned, starting with hosepipe bans, as reservoirs have reached a record low in some places.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/feb/21/drought-new-norm-for-uk>

Putting Agriculture at the Center of Climate Talks, *VOA News, February 20*

This June in Brazil, delegates will mark the twentieth anniversary of what is commonly known as the Earth Summit. One of the issues that the delegates plan to discuss in June at Rio+20 is the role of agriculture in climate change. A recent article written by a team of scientists says agriculture should be a top priority in climate change negotiations.

<http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/Putting-Agriculture-at-the-Center-of-Climate-Talks-139760603.html>

WOMEN & GIRLS

Media Articles:

East African Program Promotes University Education For Women, *VOA News, Cathy Majtenyi, VOA News, February 18*

Women are increasing their numbers and profiles in research institutions through such initiatives as the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development mentorship program. The so-called AWARD program was launched in 2008 by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. AWARD receives nearly 3,000 applications for 250 two-year fellowships.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/east/East-African-Program-Promotes-University-Education-For-Women-139574513.html>

Malnutrition: The Scourge of Rwanda's Children, *Opinion, Jay Rayner, Guardian, February 18*

If nothing is done, it is estimated that half a billion children will be stunted over the next 15 years. It amounts to a lost generation. What's more, it is the underlying cause of 2.6 million child deaths a year, or 300 every hour. A combination of rising food prices, political instability and lack of technological progress in farming

have meant that improvements in child nutrition here have proved hard to come by.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/19/rwanda-malnutrition-children>

Niger: Food Crisis or Ground Floor Opportunity to Save Mothers and Babies, *Opinion, Jeanne Faulkner, Huffington Post, February 17*

Ask a woman when she was hungriest, she might say when she was pregnant or breastfeeding. Ask a man and he might remember being a teenager, growing several inches a year. Ask Dije Ousman when she was hungriest, she'll say, "Today." Dije lives in Dakoro, Niger. She knows what every breastfeeding mother knows - if you don't eat, you don't make milk. She knows something mothers in developed countries don't: If you don't make milk, your baby dies. Now that, my friends, is hunger.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeanne-faulkner/niger-famine- b 1285761.html>

MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE ISSUES

Reports:

Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade, *USDA, February 23*

Fiscal 2012 agricultural exports are forecast at \$131 billion, down \$1 billion from the November forecast and \$6.4 billion below fiscal 2011. Compared to last year, grain and feed exports are forecast down \$3.9 billion with wheat, corn, rice, and feeds all lowered. The fiscal 2012 import projection is raised to \$106.5 billion. This represents a 13-percent increase from 2011.

<http://usda01.library.cornell.edu/usda/current/AES/AES-02-23-2012.pdf>

Media Articles:

Exports Key to U.S. Agriculture Growth, Ex-USDA Leaders Say, *Alan Bjerga, Bloomberg, February 23*

The U.S. will need to step up efforts to sell surplus farm production overseas if the country hopes to preserve this year's record profit and exports, former U.S. Agriculture Secretary Clayton Yeutter said. Trade, especially with prospering Asian nations, will be crucial to securing markets for U.S. farm goods, said Yeutter, who served under President George H.W. Bush and later became the U.S. trade representative. The U.S. is the world's largest agricultural exporter. "I want to be sure we don't get lulled into complacency by thinking we can sell everything we produce here in the U.S.," Yeutter said.

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-02-23/exports-key-to-u-s-agriculture-growth-ex-usda-leaders-say.html>

Struggling Farmers Furious after Iraq Stops Buying US Rice, Opts for Cheaper Grain from India, *Washington Post, February 23*

Iraq has been buying instead from Asia and South America, and it recently lowered its quality standards so it would be able to buy rice from India, something that was impossible under the Iraqi Grain Board's old rules. In Iraq, officials said the decision to forego American rice largely came down to a matter of taste.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/worldbusiness/struggling-farmers-furious-after-iraq-stops-buying-us-rice-opts-for-cheaper-grain-from-india/2012/02/23/gIQAIngPpUR_story.html

U.S. Sees Bigger Corn Crop as Farmers Boost Acres to Highest Since WW II, *Bloomberg, February 23*

The U.S. corn crop may rise as farmers plant the most acres since World War II, easing pressure on higher food and fuel prices, the government said. Soybean planting may be little changed while wheat expands. China, the world's biggest soybean consumer, last week signed agreements in Iowa and California to purchase 13.4 million tons of the oilseed from the U.S. by Aug. 31, 2013.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-02-23/u-s-corn-crop-record-may-ease-food-costs-as-farmers-plant-most-since-1944.html>

EU Agricultural Policy Needs to Be Flexible, De Castro Says, *Tony C. Dreibus, Bloomberg, February 22*

The European Union's Common Agricultural Policy should let member countries tailor programs to their crops, said Paolo de Castro, chairman of the European Parliament's agriculture and rural development

committee. The EC said it would require farmers to set aside 7 percent of farmland for so-called greening and force them to diversify their crops. Those proposals may not work for farmers growing food like olives, de Castro said in an interview.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-02-22/eu-agricultural-policy-needs-to-be-flexible-de-castro-says.html>

Harper Government Strengthens Agricultural Ties With Serbia, *MSNBC, February 22*

Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz announced that Canada has signed a mutually beneficial Memorandum of Understanding on agriculture with Serbia that will help facilitate exports and boost Canada's economy. The MOU on agricultural co-operation has two main components which are effective immediately: an agreement on export of animal genetics to Serbia and an exchange of agricultural information, technology and products between the two countries.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46487883>

Russia Seeks 'Foothold' in Asian Wheat Market, Challenging U.S., Australia, *Luzy Ann Javier, Bloomberg, February 22*

Russia set to be the third-largest wheat shipper, aims to secure a "foothold" among buyers in Asia, increasing competition for U.S. and Australian supplies. Futures dropped 20 percent in the past year as global crops and stockpiles headed for records and trade rose to the second- highest level in at least in five decades. The U.S., the biggest exporter, has already lost market share to Russia in North Africa and the Middle East and faces competition from record Australian shipments in Asia.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-02-22/russia-seeks-foothold-in-asian-wheat-market-to-challenge-u-s-australia.html>

Aim for 4% Agricultural Growth in Twelfth Plan, *The Economic Times, February 21*

Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh on Monday said that the country should strive for an agricultural growth of 4% or even higher in the XII plan. He said the government is committed to raising R&D spending as a whole to at least 2% of the GDP by the end of the XII Plan from the current level of about 1%. He also called for private-sector participation in research and development, which is vital to agricultural growth.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-02-21/news/31083074_1_pulse-production-gdp-food-production

Trade Disputes Over Agriculture Persist Despite Friendly Tone of Chinese VP's Visit, *Washington Post, February 17*

Whether it's apples, beef, chicken or strawberries, trade between China and the United States remains complicated. U.S. exports to China grew 33 percent from 2009 to 2010 to surpass \$100 billion for the first time. At the same time, Chinese exports to the U.S. grew 23 percent to \$365 billion. But both want to sell more. The U.S. has complained about China's import taxes and refusal to buy American beef, while China wants the U.S. to lift its restrictions on chicken now that the bird flu outbreak has ended.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/trade-disputes-over-agriculture-persist-despite-friendly-tone-of-chinese-vps-visit/2012/02/17/gIQAjDnTKR_story.html

AGRIBUSINESS

Media Articles:

Bunge to Boost Investments in Brazil Agriculture, *Bloomberg, February 23*

International foods processor Bunge Ltd plans to invest an additional 1 billion reais (\$584 million) in Brazil with a possible focus on palm oil production, the company's chief executive of agribusiness in Brazil, Pedro Parente, said. The investment is in addition to the \$2.5 billion in investments through 2016 in sugar, ethanol and biomass energy generation that the company announced in August.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/23/palm-bunge-brazil-idUSL2E8DNCU920120223>

Maharashtra gets Tough with Seed Companies Selling Duds, *Jayashree Bhosale, Economic Times, February*

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At least one variety of almost all the leading seed companies has been rejected till now in Maharashtra. Though the agriculture department did not name the five companies having the highest rejections, officials confirmed that seeds of Ganga Kaveri, Nuziveedu, Kaveri Seeds, Monsanto Holdings, Sriram Bio Seeds, Advanta, Mahyco, Rasi, Ankur and Krishidhan have been denied permission to sell.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-02-21/news/31082987_1_seed-companies-national-seed-association-kaveri-seeds

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