

GLOBAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE WEEKLY NEWS BRIEF OF THE GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



February 26th – March 4th, 2011

Quote of the Week: *“This special report looks at ways to boost yields of the main crops, considers the constraints of land and water and the use of fertiliser and pesticide, assesses biofuel policies, explains why technology matters so much and examines the impact of recent price rises. It points out that although the concerns of the critics of modern agriculture may be understandable, the reaction against intensive farming is a luxury of the rich. Traditional and organic farming could feed Europeans and Americans well. It cannot feed the world.”* - The 9 billion-people question, The Economist Special Report on Feeding the World, February 2011

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.
- To receive *Global Food for Thought* weekly, please register [here](#).
- To unsubscribe from *Global Food for Thought* weekly, please click [here](#).

CONTENTS

[Key Articles and Reports](#)

[Relevant U.S. Administration and Congressional Activities](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[SPECIAL COVERAGE: CRISES IN MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA](#)

[Agricultural Issues](#)

[Foreign Assistance](#)

[Environment \(Water/Climate\)](#)

[Women & Girls](#)

[Market Access and Trade Issues](#)

[Agribusiness](#)

KEY ARTICLES AND REPORTS

Bread and Protests: the Return of High Food Prices, *The International Institute for Strategic Studies*, March 2011

Record food prices have been just one ingredient in the unrest in the Arab world. However, they are causing major concern across the globe for the second time in three years. The World Bank is concerned about possible unrest in Central America and the Caribbean, particularly El Salvador, Haiti, Grenada and Jamaica. The FAO’s senior economist Abdolreza Abbassian thinks the Central Asian countries of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are in a precarious position, as well as African states.

<http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-17-2011/march/bread-and-protests-the-return-of-high-food-prices/>

SEE ALSO: Food Prices Reach Record High, *Wall Street Journal*, March 4

World food prices rose 2.2% in February from the previous month to a record peak, the United Nations' food body said Thursday, as it warned that volatility in oil markets could push prices even higher. The FAO price index rose by 2.2% to an average of 236 points last month, the highest record in real and nominal terms since the agency started monitoring prices in 1990.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703300904576177921469742708.html>

SEE ALSO: World Food Prices Highest in at least 20 years, *Washington Post*, March 3

Prices for major crops climbed Thursday as a U.N. agency said food costs are now at their highest point. At the heart of the problem is rising demand for crops. New middle-class consumers in China and India are eating more grain and meat than ever. Higher oil prices have complicated the problem.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/03/AR2011030304279.html>

Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, U.S.

Department of State, March 2

Global food prices are approaching an all-time high. Three years ago, this led to protests and riots in dozens of countries. Food security is a cornerstone of global stability. We are helping farmers to grow more food, drive economic growth, and turn aid recipients into trading partners.

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/03/157556.htm>

SEE ALSO: Clinton Says Security Tied to Diplomacy, Aid Budgets, *Bloomberg*, March 1

The top U.S. diplomat used the hearing to warn lawmakers against the impulse to withdraw from global engagement. Clinton was emphatic about the value of foreign aid as a way to maintain U.S. influence overseas. The close ties between the U.S. and Egyptian militaries are due in large part to State Department programs, she said.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-03-01/clinton-says-security-competitiveness-tied-to-state-budget.html>

Girls are the Backbone of Rural Economies, *Catherine Bertini, co-chair, Global Agricultural Development Initiative, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, USA Today, March 4*

Girls are the backbone of rural economies in the developing world. They labor in fields and off the farm – fetching water and firewood for their households and caring for their younger brothers and sisters. The lucky ones also go to school. These girls have great potential as leaders and contributors in agricultural transformation, non-farm work, education, and entrepreneurship. However, they are some of the most invisible people in the world.

http://doc.mediaplanet.com/all_projects/6574.pdf

Online Map shows Countries at Risk from Rising Food Prices, *Environmental Working Group, March 2011*

The Environmental Working Group and ActionAid have collaborated to create an interactive world map highlighting countries at highest risk of a food crisis due to the recent food price hikes. This interactive map identifies the countries that are at the greatest risk of a food crisis if food and energy prices continue to rise.

<http://www.ewg.org/hot-spots-emerging-global-food-crisis>

Amidst Congressional Cuts, the Bipartisan Case for the Peace Corps, *Opinion, Representatives Mike Honda, Sam Farr, Tom Petri, John Garamendi, U.S. House of Representative, Huffington Post, March 2*

Fifty years ago, President John F. Kennedy challenged Americans to serve their country through "a peace corps of talented men and women." Through war and conflict, Peace Corps volunteers have delivered to the world an inspiring, uplifting side of humanity that reflects Americans' better nature -- service to others in the common cause of global peace and development.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rep-mike-honda/the-bipartisan-case-for-c_b_830278.html

SEE ALSO: Peace Corps: A Program for the 21st Century, *Opinion, Kevin F. F. Quigley, Huffington Post, March 1*

The Peace Corps helps Americans know the world as it is and as it is becoming. It provides the kind of training in language, adaptability, working in foreign cultures that simply can't be taught in business school because to truly understand the world you have to live as others do, seeing the world as they do. As a result, the Peace Corps also fosters social entrepreneurs.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kevin-quigley/peace-corps-a-program-for_b_829675.html

SEE ALSO: At 50, US Peace Corps Still Draws Volunteers, *VOA News, March 1*

President John F. Kennedy told new volunteers that America's reputation in the countries they were going to would depend to a large extent on them. Since then, more than 200,000 volunteers have worked in countries all over the world.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/usa/At-50-US-Peace-Corps-Still-Draws-Volunteers-117174358.html>

Could Next Mideast uprising happen in Saudi Arabia? *Editorial, Rachel Bronson, Vice President of programs and studies, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Washington Post, February 25*

As Saudi leaders look across the region, they have reason to believe that they won't find themselves confronting revolutionaries at their own doorstep. The upheaval in Egypt, Libya, Bahrain and elsewhere is driven by popular revulsion with sclerotic, corrupt leadership. These countries do not have clear succession plans in place. They do have organized opposition movements, both inside and outside their borders, that are exploiting new means and technologies to challenge the governments. Their leaders are vulnerable to independent militaries. Their economies are weak, and educational opportunities are few. These conditions seem to be present in Saudi Arabia, too, but the country is different in some important ways.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/25/AR2011022503188.html>

Extending the Reach, *Roger Thurow, Senior Fellow on Global Agricultural and Food Policy, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Global Food for Thought Blog, March 4*

Extension agents were essential in spreading the agricultural revolutions in every part of the world.

Everywhere except Africa. Government budgets didn't have enough money to fund them, nor political will to insist that they do; international development agencies, in their negligence of agriculture, thought Africa, alone among the continents of the world, could do without them.

<http://globalfoodforthought.typepad.com/global-food-for-thought>

RELEVANT U.S. ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Feed the Future Initiative Helps Countries Cope with Rising Food Price, *U.S. Department of State, March 3*

The U.S. Government's Feed the Future Initiative utilizes innovation, research, and development to improve agricultural productivity, link farmers to local and regional markets, enhance nutrition, and build safety nets. These investments will increase the supply of food where it is needed and help vulnerable people withstand price shocks better.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/03/157626.htm>

No Ag Program cuts in Senate-passed Funding Resolution, *Hagstrom Report, March 2*

The Senate today passed a two-week government finance resolution that does not include any cuts in the agriculture programs. The measure cuts spending by \$4 billion, but the only Agriculture Department program affected is a \$29 million broadband account that Obama had also targeted.

www.hagstromreport.com

SEE ALSO: Full Text of H.J. Resolution 44

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hjres44enr/pdf/BILLS-112hjres44enr.pdf>

Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack testifies before the House Appropriation Committee, *USDA, March 1*

"USDA is an active partner in the Administration's global food security initiative –Feed the Future – and we have been working closely with the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and others to further its objectives. As an implementing partner, USDA can offer expertise in basic and applied research that benefits both the United States and developing countries; in-country capacity building and technical assistance; and market information and economic analysis."

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2011/03/0090.xml>

SEE ALSO: Vilsack says wealthy can give up subsidies, *Des Moines Register, March 1*

Vilsack was defending the administration's proposal to tighten the income eligibility standards for receiving annual direct payments and other forms of commodity subsidies. The proposal would cut

off payments to people with more than \$500,000 a year in farm income and \$250,000 in off-farm earnings.

<http://blogs.desmoinesregister.com/dmr/index.php/2011/03/01/vilsack-wealthy-farmers-can-afford-to-give-up-subsides/>

Food Security is National Security, *Speech, Jim McGovern, U.S. House of Representatives, March 1*

The lack of food security contributes to political instability – food was a primary reason people first took to the streets in Tunisia. Under the leadership of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and USAID Administrator Raj Shah, the U.S. government responded to that call – and over a two-year period of time initiated a comprehensive, government-wide approach to reduce global hunger and increase nutrition and food security. Not because it feels good. Not even because it's the right and moral thing to do. But because it's in our national security and economic interests to make countries food secure, more productive, healthier and more stable. This strategy is known as the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative.

<http://usa.wfp.org/news-story/food-security-national-security>

In boost for Republican plan, Fed chief says cuts won't derail recovery, *The Hill, March 1*

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke says a plan from House Republicans to cut \$61 billion in spending this year would not harm economic growth. The GOP's proposed spending cuts, passed as part of a continuing resolution, would probably reduce "growth on the margins" and lower gross domestic product by only one- or two-tenths of a percent, Bernanke told the Senate Banking Committee.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/on-the-money/801-economy/146705-bernanke-says-house-republican-plan-would-have-small-effect-on-growth>

Report on Opportunities to Reduce Duplication in Government Programs, *GAO, March 1*

This is GAO's first annual report to Congress in response to a new statutory requirement that GAO identify federal programs, agencies, offices, and initiatives, either within departments or government wide, which have duplicative goals or activities.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11318sp.pdf>

SEE ALSO: GAO report expected to show hundreds of duplicate programs, *The Hill, February 28*

The Government Accountability Office found hundreds of possibly duplicate programs throughout the federal government's agencies, according to a report scheduled for release on Tuesday.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/on-the-money/budget/146641-gao-report-expected-to-show-hundreds-of-duplicate-programs>

Interview with Honorable Dallas Tonsager, *Undersecretary for Rural Development, Department of Agriculture, Hagstrom Report, February 28*

The rural development mission area was formed in 1994 during Clinton's presidency by bringing together the old Farmers Home Administration non-farm financial programs for rural housing, community facilities, water and waste disposal, and rural businesses and the former Rural Electrification Administration's electricity and telephone programs, which became part of the Rural Utilities Service. Since then, bringing high-speed Internet service to rural America has been added to RUS's responsibilities.

www.hagstromreport.com

House budget plan could kill 700K jobs, *Politico, February 28*

Republicans' efforts to cut billions of dollars from the federal budget between now and October could cost the country as many as 700,000 jobs by the end of next year, a nonpartisan economic analysis released Monday found. Moody's chief economist, Mark Zandi, projected that the House proposal would cut real GDP growth by 0.5 percent in 2011 and 0.2 percent in 2012.

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0211/50341.html#ixzz1FLNEapbL>

UPCOMING EVENTS

CARE's 2011 Conference & International Women's Day Celebration

Date: March 8th-10th, 2011

Location: Washington, D.C.

The CARE Conference & International Women's Day Celebration will unite hundreds of CARE supporters — individuals, partner organizations, major donors and corporate partners. Together, we'll come together as part of the movement that is bringing hope to millions of poor women, families and communities around the world. At CARE's conference, participants will learn why CARE places women and girls at the heart of our efforts to fight poverty. When equipped with the proper resources, women rise to overcome the great challenges they face. Every day women are leading the way for lasting change for all.

<http://www.careconference.org/>

COMESA Investment Forum 2011

Date: March 23rd – 24th, 2011

Location: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

The conference will provide an interactive platform to find out first-hand about the opportunities in the region, where investors and business leaders are putting their money, and how they are going about generating high long-term returns. The agenda will focus on 5 key sectors: Trade, Finance, Logistics, Agriculture/Agribusiness and Infrastructure.

<http://www.partnership-africa.org/content/comesa-investment-forum-2011>

Agriculture 2.0

Date: April 11th – 12th, 2011

Location: San Francisco

This event will be the 5th installment in the conference series and for the first time we are adding several tracks to a multi-day format. This expansion will facilitate the creation of a commercial marketplace for the industry—a first of its kind, one-stop shop not only for venture capitalists and early stage companies, but also for senior decision makers in agribusiness and farmland funds, commodities experts, growth stage and institutional investors, key industry insiders, and policy makers. They all come together at Agriculture 2.0 with one intent – to catalyze and capitalize on this rapidly evolving industry.

[https://www.iirusa.com/agriculture20/register.xml?registration=&utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=U2339%252520-%2525201%252520\(1\)&utm_content=&step=start](https://www.iirusa.com/agriculture20/register.xml?registration=&utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=U2339%252520-%2525201%252520(1)&utm_content=&step=start)

Climate, Climate Change, and Public Health Workshop

Date: April 12th – 14th, 2011

Location: Baltimore, MD

This workshop will focus on the emerging public health issues arising from recent changes in the Earth's climate, such as: new patterns in diseases, the availability and quality of water, and adaptation strategies.

<http://gaia.jhuapl.edu>

19th Annual Food and Ag Policy Conference

Date: April 13th – 14th, 2011

Location: Washington, D.C.

<http://www.informaecon.com/WashMarkCalendar2011.pdf>

CropLife America National Policy Conference: Lost in Translation? Deciphering the Discourse on Modern Agriculture

Date: May 12th, 2011

Location: Washington, DC

The CropLife America National Policy Conference will bring together leading experts in the fields of agriculture, food safety and security, agricultural technology and policy to offer highly diverse perspectives and engage in frank discussions on all issues facing modern agriculture. Our Master of Ceremonies will again be Marc Gunther, contributing editor at FORTUNE magazine and a senior writer at Greenbiz.com who has appeared on NBC, ABC, CNN and NPR.

<http://www.croplifeamerica.org/nationalpolicyconference>

International Conference and Exhibition on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa

Date: May 13th – May 15th, 2011

Location: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The aim of the conference is to: 1) provide sound scientific knowledge on issues related to technology transfer and capacity building; 2) identify more efficient ways and means of building capacity and developing sustainable and useful institutions; 3) present lessons learned and identify success factors regarding biotechnology knowledge transfer and capacity building; and 4) serve as a forum for cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary dialogue between scientists and policy makers on issues related to the development, use, and application of biotechnology.

<http://www.issdet.org/>

Second World Conference of Humanitarian Studies

Date: June 2nd – June 5th, 2011

Location: Tufts University, Medford, MA

Humanitarian crises and the responses they trigger are evolving rapidly. This conference looks at the opportunities and threats for addressing these crises, as well as at the strengths and weaknesses of the actual responses. The conference provides a unique forum for both scholars and practitioners to present research and debate these issues. In particular, the conference focuses on four broad themes: emerging from protracted crises; new directions in policy; innovations in humanitarian practice; and advances in public health and food security in crises.

<http://www.humanitarianstudies2011.org/>

Cracking the Nut Conference: Overcoming Obstacles to Rural and Agricultural Finance

Date: June 21st – 22nd, 2011

Location: Washington, DC

Rural and Agricultural Finance have long been considered tough nuts to crack. The Cracking the Nut Conference will unite the world's leading rural and agricultural finance leaders in a collaborative pursuit of learning, leverage and large scale change. To share about your work and what you have been doing to crack these nuts, please [submit a proposal](#) to lead a session at the conference. The deadline for submitting a proposal is Monday, February 28, 2011. This conference is aimed at practitioners, private sector professionals, policymakers, funders, researchers, and other rural and agricultural finance professionals. For more information visit: www.crackingthenutconference.com or email Rashmi Ekka, rekka@azmj.org

Agricultural Value Chain Finance Training

Date: June 22nd-23rd, 2011

Location: The QED Group, Washington, D.C.

Farmers, suppliers, processors, buyers and others need access to finance to operate and develop their businesses. Also, bankers often struggle to contain their risks and costs in financing agriculture. At the Agricultural Value Chain Finance Training, lead by Calvin Miller, FAO and Stephanie Charitonenko you will learn about developing commercially attractive financial services that meet the needs of the various actors in the value chain and how a value chain focus can result in market growth and reduced credit risk.

<http://www.cvent.com/events/cracking-the-nut-conference-overcoming-obstacles-to-rural-and-agricultural-finance/custom-19-4a76ee2bb48b423b9d98c50ddae38904.aspx>

Food Security, Health and Impact Conference

Date: June 22nd – June 24th, 2011

Location: Leeds, United Kingdom

The Africa College, a research partnership between IITA, ICIPE and University of Leeds is holding an international conference to share lessons on translating research results into impact for food security, nutrition and human health. The conference includes knowledge brokering sessions and workshops and is asking two questions: How can the results of basic science and inter-disciplinary research lead to increased impact on food security and human health?; and, How can partnerships between research and development organisations deliver innovation and impact? Sponsorship for African participants is available. For more details see: <http://www.africacollege.leeds.ac.uk/>

World Food Prize 25th Anniversary

Date: October 12th – 14th, 2011

Location: Des Moines, IA

Twenty-five years ago, Norman Borlaug's dream of creating an annual award to recognize and inspire breakthrough achievements in increasing the quality, quantity and availability of food came true. The World Food Prize was founded. This year, we are thrilled to announce that the events will also include the Grand Opening of the Norman E. Borlaug Hall of Laureates, a permanent home for the World Food Prize and an event center and educational facility to honor humanitarian heroes and inspire the next generation of scientific leaders.

<http://www.worldfoodprize.org/>

SPECIAL COVERAGE: CRISES IN MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Media Articles:

World Food Program appeals for safe passage after aid ship turned back, *LA Times, March 3*

The United Nations World Food Program said that it has urgently appealed for safe access to Libya after a ship chartered by the humanitarian aid agency to transport more than 1,000 metric tons of wheat to the eastern port of Benghazi was forced to turn back to Malta. WFP is launching a three-month, \$38-million regional operation to provide food assistance inside Libya.

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/03/libya-refugees-world-food-progam.html>

WHO warns of epidemics among refugees in Tunisia, *Agence France-Presse, March 3*

The UN World Health Organization warned Thursday of risks of epidemics among the tens of thousands of people massed in southern Tunisia after fleeing violence in Libya.

<http://health.yahoo.net/news/s/afp/libyatunisiaunrestdiseaseun>

Kerry calls for US aid after Arab revolts, *Boston Globe, March 3*

Senator John F. Kerry called for a new financial aid package to encourage democracy and stabilize economies of nations that have thrown off autocratic governments in the Middle East and North Africa. Globally, the United States spent about \$2.7 billion last year to support democracy and governance around the world. About \$500 million went to the Middle East and North Africa.

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2011/03/03/kerry_calls_for_us_aid_after_arab_revolts/

NATO move on Libya 'absurd' says Turkey, *Financial Times, March 1*

Turkey's prime minister has hit out at US and UK calls for military intervention in the Libya crisis. France also expressed doubts about military intervention, stressing that humanitarian aid and cutting off Col Gaddafi's income sources should be the priorities.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/27198084-43fe-11e0-8f20-00144feab49a.html>

Refugee Agency Reports 'Humanitarian Emergency' as Multitudes Flee Libya, *New York Times, February 28*

The executive director of the World Food Program traveled to Tunisia on Monday to meet with government officials on refugees' needs and the impact on the region. In Geneva, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced that the United States Agency for International Development had set aside \$10 million for humanitarian assistance and begun an inventory of American emergency food supplies.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/01/world/europe/01refugee.html>

SEE ALSO: Aid crisis grows on Tunisia border, *BBC News, March 1*

The situation on Libya's border with Tunisia has reached crisis point, as tens of thousands of foreigners flee unrest in the country. Aid staff are battling to cope with an exodus that has seen some 140,000 people crossing into Tunisia and Egypt.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12606855>

Helping the Arabs help themselves, *Opinion, Doyle McManus, Los Angeles Times, February 27*

A basic tenet of the U.S. war against terrorism under both George W. Bush and Barack Obama has been the need to "drain the swamp" — to eliminate the conditions that drive young Muslims toward extremism. The

Obama administration says yes, but in some cases, it's been slow to take action. And most members of Congress say yes too, but they're caught up in a frenzy of budget cutting that's likely to reduce the money available for the job.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-mcmanus-column-mideast-20110227,0,3890793.column>

The Price of food is at the heart of this wave of revolutions, *The Independent*, February 27

Revolution is breaking out all over. As Gaddafi marshals his thugs and mercenaries for a last-ditch fight in Tripoli, several died as protests grew more serious in Iraq. Meanwhile, the spirit of revolt has already leapt like a forest fire to half a dozen other ill-governed African nations, with serious disturbances reported in Mauritania, Gabon, Cameroon and Zimbabwe.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/the-price-of-food-is-at-the-heart-of-this-wave-of-revolutions-2226896.html>

High food prices threaten seething Mideast, *UPI*, February 25

As if the Middle East wasn't battered enough by political turmoil, analysts say the region is likely to be hit by rising food prices -- one of the problems that triggered the unrest. The political tempest that has unseated two presidents and is expected to see the downfall of a third could well be fueled by the rising oil prices that it has engendered.

http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2011/02/25/High-food-prices-threaten-seething-Mideast/UPI-89411298658667/

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

Reports:

Take it to the Farmer: Reaching the World's Smallholders, *The World Food Prize*, March 2011

The 2010 Borlaug Dialogue Highlights publication is now available online. The 2010 theme was "Take It to the Farmer: Reaching the World's Smallholders." The publication features photos, speech excerpts and additional highlights from the 2010 Borlaug Dialogue.

http://www.worldfoodprize.org/documents/filelibrary/documents/borlaugdialogue2010_2010transcripts/2010WFPHighlights_3EB4B339D46E6.pdf

Rising Global Interest in Farmland: Can It Yield Sustainable and Equitable Benefits?, *World Bank*, 2011

This book aims to provide key pieces of information needed for informed debate about large-scale land acquisition by drawing on the experience from past land expansions, discussing predictions for potential future demand, and providing empirical evidence of what is happening on the ground in the countries most affected by the recent increase in demand for land.

http://publications.worldbank.org/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=0&products_id=23921&cid=EXT_FAnews_P_EXT

Media Articles:

Corn Growers struggle with Ethanol Policy, *Hagstrom Report*, March 3

Delegates to the National Corn Growers Association's Corn Congress struggled to come up with a policy on the ethanol tax credit and protective tariff or an alternative while a key American Soybean Association official said that group would seek an extension of the biodiesel tax credit.

www.hagstromreport.com

Food Security to get \$1.8 billion boost, *The National*, March 1

The International Finance Corporation has set aside US\$1.8 billion for investment this year in regional projects such as agribusinesses to improve food security, officials say. Ajay Malik, the investment officer for the Mena region and southern Europe at the IFC, the World Bank's investment arm, said it had raised its investment target from \$1.7bn last year and planned to increase the amount in coming years.

<http://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/food-security-to-get-1-8bn-boost>

Foreign Investors See Potential in African Agriculture, *VOA News, March 1*

In addition to providing employment, agriculture has the potential to transform African societies through the increased export of produce to Western markets. But in recent years, government assistance to small farmers and to agriculture in general has been in decline. There are some signs that local and western investors are slowly attracting interest in African agricultural potential.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/pan/Foreign-Investors-See-Potential-in-African-Agriculture030111.html>

Planting Seeds in Africa and Asia, *Wall Street Journal, February 28*

When stem rust disease attacks a wheat field the results are devastating. So the race is on to develop wheat varieties that are resistant to new and more virulent forms of stem rust disease. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in partnership with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development is giving Cornell University a \$40 million grant to continue its Durable Rust Resistance in Wheat project.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703933404576170820637984838.html>

SEE ALSO: Gates Foundation works to boost Food Production, *Reuters, February 27*

The Gates Foundation said it would donate \$70 million to a new collaboration that will focus on addressing threats to food production in the developing world, including crop diseases, pests, poor soils and harsh weather.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/27/us-gates-food-idUSTRE71Q2SX20110227>

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

Reports:

Does Recession reduce Global Health Aid? *World Health Organization, February 2011*

Overall, we found no robust evidence to support our hypothesis that recessions lead high-income countries to reduce their total development assistance for health commitments or disbursements, either immediately after recession begins or within a two-year period.

<http://www.who.int/bulletin/10-080663.pdf>

SEE ALSO: Hard times do not justify health aid cuts, *Reuters, February 25*

Researchers from Britain and the United States looked back over 30 years of economic ups and downs in Europe and found that most countries did not cut development funds during recessions. They said the findings suggest some governments may be using recession as a smokescreen for political decisions to cut aid.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/25/us-health-cuts-study-idUSTRE71067X20110225>

Editorials/Commentary:

Foreign aid: The right choice, *Opinion, Michel Gabaudan, Politico, March 3*

As the Senate begins debate on the budget for the remainder of fiscal 2011, senators will have to decide what this country's international priorities are. If senators can restore humanitarian funding to at least fiscal 2010 levels, that would allow the U.S. government to continue providing critical assistance to victims of war, persecution and natural disasters. These small pots of money reap tremendous rewards for displaced people around the world. Such investment should be an obvious choice to make.

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0311/50506.html>

Foreign aid isn't foreign. It's American, *Opinion, Laurie Garrett, Christian Science Monitor, March 3*

Total nonmilitary foreign assistance spending accounts for about 1 percent of the FY2011 federal budget. Cutting this aid won't make a difference to either debt or deficit reduction. But it will make a huge difference to the hundreds of millions of people who count on US aid for food, medicines, job training, child education, irrigation, small business subsidies, and a litany of other life-enhancing benefits. The gratitude they feel today for American generosity would swiftly yield to contempt and anger for services withdrawn.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2011/0303/Foreign-aid-isn-t-foreign-It-s-American>

Food Security: A Matter of War and Peace, *Opinion, Jayaseelan Naidoo, Huffington Post, March 3*

Food -- one of the staples of human survival -- has long been present, if on the perimeter, of revolutions and protests across the world. Price increases have forced into poverty millions of people who must spend in excess of 50 percent of their income on putting food on the table. As the numbers of hungry mouths grow, and we have precious few answers, we should all expect food to migrate from the periphery of protests and conflict to the center.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jayaseelan-naidoo/food-security-a-matter-of_b_830780.html

Obama's foreign policy pragmatism: Cautious or Indecisive?, *Opinion, Nino Saviano, The Hill, March 2*

If one is forced to describe Obama's foreign policy approach with one simple word, 'cautious' would be the best choice. Substantively, and arguably rightly so, his pragmatic policies have been met with some success and mostly bipartisan support in Congress. Cautious pragmatism, in fact, would certainly fit as a more appropriate and sophisticated depiction of the president's approach. But there is a fine line between cautious pragmatism and indecisiveness -- a line that is often blurred and easily crossed.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/campaign/147113-obamas-foreign-policy-pragmatism-cautious-or-indecisive>

Media Articles:

Oxfam calls for radical shake up of food aid, *Oxfam International, February 28*

Oxfam called for a radical shake up of the Food Aid Convention to ensure the burgeoning number of hungry people in the world get the predictable, timely and appropriate aid they need. The agency wants to see the new treaty accelerate the switch to cash and other food-related assistance, in an effort to bring food aid in line with ways to improvements to small-scale farm production.

<http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressrelease/2011-02-28/oxfam-calls-radical-shake-food-aid>

UN Food and Agriculture Organization Warned over UK funds, *BBC News, February 26*

The UK is threatening to switch funding away from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization unless its performance improves. Instead, more funding could go to the World Food Programme, which deals with emergency food aid around the globe. As a major aid donor, any cut or change in UK funding of UN programmes is likely to have a big impact.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12586783>

ENVIRONMENT (WATER/CLIMATE)

Media Articles:

EU pledges €90m in climate funds for Pacific island states, *Guardian (U.K.), March 1*

Pacific island states on the frontline of climate change are to receive €90m (£76m) in EU cash for climate-related projects in return for siding with the European bloc at international climate negotiations. The funds support projects that include mangrove replanting, watershed reforestation, rainwater harvesting, soil retention and the raising of infrastructure.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/mar/01/eu-climate-funds-pacific-islands>

Smallholders to benefit from climate change drive, *Business Daily, March 1*

Billions of shillings from developed countries are expected to end up in the hands of small scale farmers in Kenya as the world shifts attention to agriculture as the next frontier in the campaigns against climate change. World leaders will be pitching for increased financing to climate change adaptation and mitigation projects in developing nations when they meet in Bangkok for this year's UN conference on climate change.

<http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/Smallholders-to-benefit-from-climate-change-drive/-/539444/1116496/-/11kj1cz/-/>

China issues warning on climate and Growth, *New York Times*, February 28

China's environment minister on Monday issued an unusually stark warning about the effects of unbridled development on the country's air, water and soil, saying the nation's current path could stifle long-term economic growth and feed social instability.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/01/world/asia/01beijing.html>

Triple Win of Climate-Smart Agriculture put into Practice, *World Bank*, February 25

Andrew Steer, the World Bank's Special Envoy on Climate Change, witnessed firsthand how "climate smart" agriculture is transforming small scale farming and improving the livelihoods of poor farmers. Farmers in western Kenya are learning that there is a range of improved technologies and management practices available which can simultaneously lead to higher productivity, better water harvesting and retention, improved efficiency in the use of water.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSDNET/0..contentMDK:22842518~menuPK:64885113~pagePK:7278667~piPK:64911824~theSitePK:5929282,00.html>

Drought Brings Water Shortages, *VOA News*, February 25

Somalia has one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, with hundreds of thousands of people displaced due to conflict. Now, a prolonged drought is adding to the country's many problems. The Deyr rains – the short rainy season between October and December – failed.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/decapua-somalia-drought-25feb11-116919323.html>

WOMEN & GIRLS

Women and Food Security, *Center for Non-Traditional Security Studies*, March 2011

Women are a social group vulnerable to food insecurity despite being primary actors in the food chain. Vulnerability to food insecurity has a definite effect on the health of women and children, as well as social and economic impacts in terms of fewer opportunities for education and greater instances of early marriages.

http://www.rsis.edu.sg/NTS/resources/research_papers/MacArthur_Working_Paper_Arpita.pdf

Fast-tracking Girl's Education, *Education For All*, March 3

The report details the encouraging progress that girls have made in enrolling in school and, increasingly, completing their education. At the same time, the publication warns that in developing countries, too many girls are not in school, and many girls face continuing health risks, harassment, and danger just walking to class.

<http://www.educationfasttrack.org/girls-education-report>

SEE ALSO: Report Shows Encouraging Progress in Girls' Education, *VOA News*, March 3

As the world prepares to mark the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day on March 8, a new report details the progress and challenges girls face in getting an education.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/decapua-africa-girls-ed-3mar11-117322393.html>

Women in America, *The White House Council on Women and Girls*, March 2011

The Council's mission is to provide a coordinated Federal response to the challenges confronted by women and girls. This report provides a statistical picture of women in America in five critical areas: demographic and family changes, education, employment, health, and crime and violence.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/Women_in_America.pdf

The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education, *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, March 1

Armed conflict is robbing 28 million children of an education by exposing them to widespread sexual violence, targeted attacks on schools and other abuses. The report calls for tougher action against human rights violations, an overhaul of global aid priorities and more attention to education's potential to foster peace.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/>

SEE ALSO: Conflict robs 28 million Children of Education, *BBC News, March 1*

The report's author told the BBC one of the worst-affected places was the Democratic Republic of Congo, calling it "the rape capital of the world". It also says to achieve the UN goal of education for all by 2015, Africa needs nearly two million new teachers.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12606912>

Media Articles:

Fostering Economic Empowerment for Female Agricultural Producers, *World Bank, 2011*

Agriculture is a potentially important source of pro-poor growth in Haiti, and it already plays a dominant role in the economy. Women face greater obstacles. In Haitian agriculture in particular, it is widely recognized that gender is the primary influence on the division of labor and employment prospects.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:22746256~menuPK:64256345~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

International Women's Day 2011, *IFAD, March 1*

The three Rome-based agencies are organizing a joint event to present the publication titled *State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11: Women in agriculture – closing the gender gap for development*. The report examines the role that women play in agriculture and rural economies, and the ways in which they are taking on greater responsibilities as farmers, food producers and providers for their families.

<http://www.ifad.org/media/events/2011/women.htm>

USDA Offers \$1.33 Billion to Settle Farm-Women Bias Cases, *Bloomberg, February 25*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said it will provide at least \$1.33 billion in compensation as part of a "streamlined process" to settle bias lawsuits brought by Hispanic and women farmers. The government will also provide as much as \$160 million in farm-debt relief, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said today in a conference call with reporters.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-25/usda-offers-1-33-billion-to-settle-farm-women-bias-cases.html>

MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE ISSUES

Media Articles:

Rising Oil Prices Will Send Food Prices Even Higher, *Wall Street Journal, March 3*

Rising oil prices could be the crucial missing element in the recipe for a world food crisis next season. Fuel is an important input for farmers, so rising oil prices will have a direct influence on production costs. But grain prices have also become increasingly linked to the movement of oil markets as more corn, particularly in the U.S., has been diverted for biofuels.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/source/2011/03/03/rising-oil-prices-will-send-food-prices-even-higher>

A Devastating Perfect Storm: Global Food Prices Continue to Rise, *Opinion, Jake Caldwell, Center for American Progress, March 3*

Global food prices increased for the eighth consecutive month in a row. The FAO report is the latest troubling analysis to land at the feet of U.S. policymakers as they consider the possibility of deep and misguided cuts to U.S. food assistance by Congress in the coming weeks. Congress needs to embrace the Obama administration's \$1.64 billion budget request to bolster the U.S. investment in global food security through the Feed the Future initiative.

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/03/perfect_storm.html

European Central Bank Says Rate May Rise Soon, *New York Times, March 3*

The European Central Bank signaled that it could raise interest rates as soon as next month in response to intensifying inflationary pressures. An interest rate increase would be the first by a top central bank to

prevent the recent effects of higher oil and food prices from spreading into the broader economy. But it would probably further weaken Europe's economic growth prospects this year.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/04/business/global/04euro.html>

Myanmar Puts Lid on Its Rice Exports, *Wall Street Journal*, March 3

Myanmar halted rice exports to keep local prices in check as the country grapples with a bruising new round of inflation. The ban isn't expected to have much impact on global prices, however, as buyers in Africa and Bangladesh can get rice from other sources at only slightly higher prices.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703300904576178083353231872.html>

South Africa GMO crop area up, slow Africa Growth, *Reuters*, March 3

South Africa, the world's No. 9 producer of GM crops but Africa's biggest, has seen a rapid increase in gene-altered crop output since it started growing GM farm produce in 1998. But despite the need for more food, some African countries including Zimbabwe and Zambia have banned GMO imports, fearing they could be harmful to humans and animals.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFJ0E72208L20110303>

Increased investment rapidly changing Africa's IT landscape, *VOA News*, March 2

Africans must have greater access to new technologies if they are to catch up with the developed world, say development experts. McKinsey & Company, a leading global management consulting firm, estimates Africa's gross domestic product at about US \$2.6 trillion, with US \$1.4 in consumer spending.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Increased-Investment-Rapidly-Changing-Africas-IT-landscape032111-117243083.html>

Food Crisis Not as Bad as 2008 Because of Rice Price, *OECD Says*, *Bloomberg*, March 2

A global food crisis on the scale of what happened three years ago isn't recurring because an increase in the cost of rice, a staple for half the world, has lagged behind a jump for other grains. "The scale of the problem is not as bad for large parts of the world as it was in 2008," said Ken Ash, the trade and agriculture director at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-03-02/global-food-crisis-was-worse-in-2008-when-rice-costs-rose-more-oecd-says.html>

Don't End Agricultural Subsidies, Fix Time, *Opinion*, *Mark Bittman*, *New York Times*, March 1

Eliminating the \$5 billion in direct agricultural payments would level the playing field for farmers who grow non-subsidized crops, but just a bit — perhaps not even noticeably. Left and right can perhaps agree that these are payments we don't need to make. But suppose we use this money to steer our agriculture in the right direction. A Gallup poll indicates that most Americans oppose cutting aid to farmers.

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/01/dont-end-agricultural-subsidies-fix-them/>

Greater Support Urged for Private Sector in Post-Conflict Africa, *VOA News*, February 28

African economies have grown particularly over the past decade, in part due to foreign investment and to increased support for private sector expansion. In the past few years, private entrepreneurship has helped other economies take off.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/---Greater-Support-Urged-for-Private-Sector-in-Post-Conflict-Africa--117051483.html>

India to cut deficit, improve food security, *Washington Post*, February 28

India pledged to reduce its deficit while ramping up social spending Monday as the government unveiled an annual budget. High food inflation and a spate of embarrassing corruption scandals have put pressure on India's ruling Congress Party in recent months. India's poor have been hit hardest by the rise in food prices caused by increasing demand and woefully inadequate storage and distribution systems.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/28/AR2011022800802.html>

Corn, Wheat Futures Jump, *Wall Street Journal*, February 26

U.S. grain futures surged Friday as government export data showed foreign buyers took advantage of a recent dip in prices to secure supplies. Futures soared after the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported weekly corn export sales of 1.65 million tons. The report was well above analysts' expectations and marked the fourth consecutive week export sales topped one million tons.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704692904576166843954920176.html>

SEE ALSO: Ethanol Soars to 31-Month High on More Expensive Corn, *Bloomberg, February 25*
Ethanol futures soared to a 31-month high in Chicago as corn gained on higher export demand and on speculation that unrest in northern Africa and the Middle East will disrupt crude oil shipments. The grain-based additive climbed to the highest level since July 2008 after an Agriculture Department report showed corn export sales last week were 67 percent higher than the prior four-week average.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-25/ethanol-soars-to-31-month-high-on-more-expensive-corn-mideast.html>

AGRIBUSINESS

Media Articles:

Feeding Growing Global Population Will Require Science & Technology, *Dupont News, March 3*

Feeding a growing population with more and better food is a unique challenge. However, collaborative innovation creates lasting solutions, DuPont Nutrition & Health President Craig Binetti said. The world's population will reach 7 billion this year – increasing by 150,000 people per day for the next 40 years. This means the world will need to increase production of high nutritional value foods by 70% in that same period to meet the need.

http://www2.dupont.com/Media_Center/en_US/daily_news/march/article20110303.html

Can Genetically-Modified and Organic Crops Co-exist?, *VOA News, March 2*

In the midst of lawsuits over genetically modified organisms, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is asking, "Can't we all just get along?" GMO opponents are suing USDA for its recent approval of crops they say are likely to cause contamination in organic fields.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/usa/Can-Genetically-modified-and-Organic-Crops-Co-Exist-117256493.html>

WeatherBill Raises \$42 million, *New York Times, February 28*

Google Ventures and Khosla Ventures have led a \$42 million financing round in WeatherBill, a San Francisco start-up that insures farmers against extreme weather that can cripple crop production. The company runs computer simulations to predict the likelihood of extreme weather in any given location at any given time and charges farmers accordingly.

<http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/02/28/weatherbill-raises-42-million/>

Genetically-Modified Maize Threatens Crunchy Snack Chips, *VOA News, February 22*

A new type of genetically-modified maize intended for ethanol biofuel production has won approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The biofuels industry welcomes this new GM maize, created by the agriculture giant Syngenta. But opposition is coming from an unusual source - snack food makers.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/economy-and-business/GMO-Maize-Threatens-Snack-Chips-116653144.html>

Banner Photograph: © Ray Witlin / World Bank