

## GLOBAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE WEEKLY NEWS BRIEF OF THE GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



January 8<sup>th</sup> – January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Quote of the Week:** *“Arguably the two biggest challenges we face in this century are to overcome poverty and to manage climate change. One cannot be achieved without the other. Climate smart agriculture will be key to achieving both because investments in agriculture help the poor – 70 percent live in rural areas – more than any other program, and because agriculture is key to both mitigation and adaptation to climate change. It is the plants on the planet that absorb carbon dioxide, so it is between forests and the rest of the productive landscape to take carbon out of the atmosphere. The mitigation potential for improved climate smart agricultural practices is huge and needs to be tapped. It’s a triple win: if done well, higher production and productivity leads to better incomes, it improves resilience, and it captures carbon.”* – Juergen Voegelé, Director, Agriculture and Rural Development, World Bank, New York Times, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/globalagdevelopment).
- To receive *Global Food for Thought* weekly, please register [here](#).
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### KEY ARTICLES AND REPORTS

#### **Crop Harvests Presage Global Food Shock**, *Financial Times*, January 13

The world has moved a step closer to a food price shock after the US government surprised traders by cutting stock forecasts for key crops, sending corn and soybean prices to their highest level in 30 months, according to the FT. Analysts warn that the latest revision to US and global stocks means there is no further room to allow for weather problems. Crops in Argentina and Brazil, to be harvested soon, look fragile due to dryness. Stocks-to-demand for US corn have fallen to a 15-year low, while domestic stocks-to-demand for soybeans

are at their lowest in half a century. The rise in prices has aided agribusiness, with Cargill reporting a tripling of profits in its latest trading update, the WSJ reports.

<http://ftalphaville.ft.com/thecut/2011/01/13/458091/crop-harvests-presage-global-food-shock/?ftcamp=crm/email/2011114/nbe/AlphavilleNewYork/product>

**Guide for Policy and Programmatic Actions at Country Level to Address High Food Prices**, *FAO, January 2011*

Prices for most agricultural commodities have increased during the second half of 2010, due to a number of factors including unexpected shortfalls in supply caused by unfavourable weather events, policy responses by some exporting countries and fluctuations in currency markets. International prices may rise even more if production in 2011 does not increase significantly, especially for maize, soybean and wheat. The price of rice, the supply of which, according to FAO, had been more adequate than other cereals, could be affected if prices of other major food crops continue to climb. Given these circumstances, FAO felt it would be timely to publish an updated guide that would review the pros and cons of various policy and programmatic actions that countries could use to address high food prices, and their likely impact at country and household level.

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ISFP/ISFP\\_guide\\_web.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ISFP/ISFP_guide_web.pdf)

**Bringing Democrats and Republicans Together Over Food**, *Examiner, January 5*

What is on America's wish list for the New Year? Well, having Democrats and Republicans working together instead of trading jabs would be a wonderful gift. Nearly 1 billion people suffer from hunger around the globe today. Hunger and malnutrition ravage Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen, Haiti, and many other countries. If we want to help these countries gain or regain stability, it must start with adequate food supply. As Secretary of State George Marshall said after World War II, "food is the very basis of all reconstruction; hunger and insecurity are the worst enemies of peace." We should expect nothing less than for Republicans and Democrats to make the fight against hunger a foreign policy priority. They can and should come together over food.

<http://www.examiner.com/global-hunger-in-national/bringing-democrats-and-republicans-together-over-food>

**Rising Global Interest in Farmland: Can It Yield Sustainable and Equitable Benefits?**, *World Bank, January 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. It complements demand side considerations with a detailed assessment of the amount of land, whether currently cultivated or not, that might potentially be available for agricultural cultivation at the global and country levels. It then describes in some detail the policies in place to manage land acquisition processes and analyzes how these policies may affect outcomes.

[http://publications.worldbank.org/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=0&products\\_id=23921&cid=EXT\\_WBpubsAlerts\\_P\\_EXT](http://publications.worldbank.org/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=0&products_id=23921&cid=EXT_WBpubsAlerts_P_EXT)

**Varied Menus for Sustaining a Well-Fed World**, *Opinion, Andrew C. Revkin, New York Times, January 10*

On many issues relevant to charting a smooth human journey in this century, arguments are often framed between camps seeking to promote and spread "sustainable" behaviors and those pushing to advance and/or disseminate "better" technologies. In such polarized discussions, it's hard to find acknowledgment that a variegated world heading toward roughly 9 billion people by 2050 will almost assuredly require "all of the above." Still, there is plenty of room for agreement, and potentially progress. planet.

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/10/varied-menus-for-sustaining-a-well-fed-world/?partner=rss&emc=rss>

**Agriculture, Nutrition and Health**, *IFPRI, January 2011*

Agriculture is the only realistic way for most people to get the nutrition they need. And in many poor countries agriculture is highly labor intensive, and productive agriculture requires the labor of healthy, well-nourished people. In other ways, agriculture, health, and nutrition are quite separate. Professionals in these three fields usually work in isolation from one another, with their efforts sometimes dovetailing in ways that

are mutually beneficial and sometimes working at cross-purposes. Many people are now asking, How much more could agriculture do to improve human well-being if it explicitly included health and nutrition goals? What kinds of changes would be needed to maximize agriculture's contribution to human health and nutrition, and how could human health and nutrition contribute to an agricultural system that is productive and sustainable?

<http://www.ifpri.org/publication/agriculture-nutrition-health>

**Asia's Hungry Agribusiness**, *Barrons*, January 8

The global boom in commodities has raised the profile of three Asian agribusinesses listed in Singapore. The trio compete with long-established Western behemoths like publicly traded Archer Daniels Midland (ticker: ADM) and Bunge (BG), and privately held Cargill and Louis Dreyfus—a group that includes the world's largest grain, cotton and rice traders. The four Western companies—often referred to by their initials, ABCD—are being trailed by Olam International (OLAM.Singapore), Wilmar International (WIL.Singapore), and NobleGroup (NOBL.Singapore).

[http://online.barrons.com/article/SB50001424052970203439404576062121066954588.html?mod=google\\_news\\_barrons#articleTabs\\_panel\\_article%3D1](http://online.barrons.com/article/SB50001424052970203439404576062121066954588.html?mod=google_news_barrons#articleTabs_panel_article%3D1)

**Global Risks 2011**, *World Economic Forum*, 2011

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report chart a range of global risks arising from the new reality of interconnected challenges, interdependent stakeholders and an accelerating speed of change. Global Risks 2011, Sixth Edition, aims to enhance understanding and appreciation of how these risks are evolving, how they interact to create potential impacts on stakeholders, and what trade-offs are involved in managing them.

<http://riskreport.weforum.org/>

**SEE ALSO: The Water-Food-Energy Nexus**, *World Economic Forum*, 2011

Water security, food security and energy security are chronic impediments to economic growth and social stability. These are tightly interrelated: food production requires water and energy; water extraction and distribution requires energy; and energy production requires water. Food prices are also highly sensitive to the cost of energy inputs through fertilizers, irrigation, transport and processing.

<http://riskreport.weforum.org/#/videos-risks-in-focus-3>

**SEE ALSO: Davos 2011: More People, Fewer Resources, Big Risk**, *Reuters*, January 13

Among the major issues global leaders will discuss at the upcoming annual World Economic Forum in Davos are the risks associated with the tightening of water, food and energy resources to meet the demands of an increasing global population. The three interrelated resources impact both global economic growth and geopolitical stability and the Forum's Global Risks 2011 report warns that "any strategy that focuses on one part of the water-food-energy nexus without considering its interconnections risks serious unintended consequences."

<http://blogs.reuters.com/davos/2011/01/13/davos-2011-more-people-fewer-resources-big-risk/>

**The Task Ahead for the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress**, *Roger Thurow*, Senior Fellow on Global Agriculture and Food Policy, *The Chicago Council on Global Affairs*, *Global Food for Thought Blog*, January 10

As 2011 dawns, the United States government is poised to lead the greatest assault on global hunger through agriculture development since the Green Revolution half a century ago. This renewed commitment is exceedingly timely, with rising commodity prices foreshadowing a repeat of the 2008 food crisis and with the ever-expanding appetite of an ever-growing population demanding a doubling of global food production by 2050.

<http://globalfoodforthought.typepad.com/global-food-for-thought/2011/01/roger-thurow-commentary-the-task-ahead-for-the-112th-congress.html>

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## RELEVANT U.S. ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

**U.S. Mission to the United Nations: Statement at the First LDC IV Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee**, *John F. Sammis*, U.S. Deputy Representative to ECOSOC, U.S. Department of State, January 11

The United States firmly believes that development of the world's poorest countries is a moral, strategic, and economic imperative – one which we all share. The United States disbursed \$8.1 billion in Official

Development Assistance (ODA) to LDCs in 2009 and we anticipate more in 2010. U.S. food security programs benefit a number of LDCs, and in 2011 we plan to expand our \$3.5 billion Feed the Future program. This program, together with the Global Health Initiative, is a cornerstone of President Obama's Global Development Policy. Agriculture plays a crucial role in almost all LDCs, both in the form of promoting food security and as the major economic activity for much of the population -- women as well as men -- of a large percentage of LDCs. Growth of the agricultural sector is a key means to reduce poverty.

<http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/2011/154233.htm>

**Stabenow Promises Agribusiness a Centrist Approach as Ag Committee Chairwoman**, *Hagstrom Report*, January 11

In her first major speech on agriculture, incoming Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., told a Michigan agribusiness audience today that she is planning a series of farm bill hearings and pledged to be a centrist force in resolving environmental issues facing agriculture.

[www.hagstromreport.com](http://www.hagstromreport.com)

**Remarks by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to American Farm Bureau**, *USDA*, January 10

We had a pretty good year in 2010, and for that, we should be thank you. Farm income is expected to be at a level, perhaps a record level, and there are many reasons for that. Obviously, the most important reason is the productivity and the hard work of American farmers and ranchers and growers, but we also had a record year in exports, and I know that the Farm Bureau is interested in making sure that we continue to focus on exports, and I'm here today to assure you that we are going to do so.

[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda!/ut/p/c5/04\\_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os\\_gAC9-wMj8QY0MDpxBDA09nXw9DFxcXQ-cAA\\_1wkA5kFaGuQBxeASbmnu4uBgbe5hB5AxzA0UDfzyM\\_N1W\\_IDS7zdFRUREAZXAypA!/dl3/d3/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS9ZQnZ3LzZfUDhNVIZMVDmXMEJUMTBjQ01IMURERDFDUDA!/?contentidonly=true&contentid=2011%2F01%2F0007.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda!/ut/p/c5/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os_gAC9-wMj8QY0MDpxBDA09nXw9DFxcXQ-cAA_1wkA5kFaGuQBxeASbmnu4uBgbe5hB5AxzA0UDfzyM_N1W_IDS7zdFRUREAZXAypA!/dl3/d3/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS9ZQnZ3LzZfUDhNVIZMVDmXMEJUMTBjQ01IMURERDFDUDA!/?contentidonly=true&contentid=2011%2F01%2F0007.xml)

**Vilsack: Innovation Drives the Farmer and Farm Policy**, *American Farm Bureau*, January 10

Whatever the desired end result -- biofuels diversification, improved crop insurance or a farm bill that meets rural America's needs without breaking the bank -- innovation is where it starts, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack told farmers and ranchers at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 92nd annual meeting. "We need an economy that creates and innovates," Vilsack said. "We know it can work because it's worked in agriculture." Last year's potential record farm income is primarily due to farmers' productivity and heart, according to Vilsack, but the trade surplus agriculture posted -- the only trade surplus among the many sectors of the U.S. economy -- helped too.

<http://www.fb.org/index.php?fuseaction=newsroom.newsfocus&year=2011&file=nr0110l.html>

**USDA's Vilsack Seeks Compromise on Biotech Crops**, *Reuters*, January 10

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack told the largest U.S. farm group on Monday that farmers could see less government interference if they find a way for traditional and genetically modified crops to co-exist. Farm groups and the biotechnology industry are skeptical of Vilsack's "co-existence" proposal.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE7083CA20110111>

**Chambliss Likely to Lose Ag Leadership but Will Stay Involved in Ag Issues**, *Hagstrom Report*, January 9

Senate Agriculture Committee ranking member Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., signaled today that he will leave that leadership post to become the highest ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, but said he would still be a member of the Agriculture committee and very involved in agriculture issues.

<http://hagstromreport.com/>

**Briefing on Haitian Food Security**, *Patricia Haslach, Ambassador Deputy Coordinator, U.S. Department of State*, January 7

Our focus with Feed the Future is investing resources actually in agricultural-led development, and in Haiti's case this is to improve the food security of the Haitian people over the long term. This is not a short-term program. This is one where we're trying to really look to the future and commit to the future. Our

contribution is actually – I mentioned to a cooperative global effort centered on country-owned processes and plans that implement a common approach to improving food security, ag production and, again, nutrition. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/01/154137.htm>

### **USAID Builds Partnerships with Religious Leaders and Faith-based Organizations to Reduce Hunger and Poverty, USAID, January 6**

On January 4, 2011, the Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Dr. Rajiv Shah reached out to faith-based and nongovernmental organizations during the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships event, co-hosted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and USAID, to convey the importance of partnership on reducing hunger and poverty. The event gathered more than 30 religious leaders and representatives of faith-based organizations from across the country for a consultation to share their experience and knowledge in food and agriculture programs.

<http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2011/pr110106.html>

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **IFAD Conference on New Directions for Smallholder Agriculture**

*Date:* January 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011

*Location:* Rome

IFAD is organising an International Conference on “New Directions for Smallholder Agriculture” on 24-25 January 2011 in Rome, Italy to discuss the future of some 500 million smallholders. In much of Africa and South Asia, small farms still account for the largest share of agricultural output. Smallholders have proved remarkably persistent; the area operated in small farms in the developing world appears to be rising, and the average farm size continues to decline in large parts of the developing world. Most of the smallholders and their dependents, some two billion of them, live in poverty, are more fragmented than before, and have limited capacity to link up to market opportunities.

<http://www.ifad.org/events/agriculture/index.htm>

### **The Corporate Council on Africa Agribusiness Working Group Rollout Event**

*Date:* February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011

*Location:* Washington, D.C.

The Agribusiness Working Group seeks to be a private sector voice to foster an enabling environment for investment in Africa’s agricultural value-chains through better coordination of government development policies and private sector investment. Areas of focus will include: trade and investment; financing; agricultural technology, natural resource management & value chain enhancement; technical assistance; capacity building and stakeholder alignment.

<http://www.cvent.com/EVENTS/Info/Summary.aspx?i=6d4d884c-e8ba-453e-aa93-36e83585e5a3>

### **Launch of the UK Global Food and Farming Futures Foresight Project Report**

*Date:* February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011

*Location:* London

The report will look out to 2050 and take a global view of the food system, considering issues of demand, production and supply as well as broader environmental issues. Because of the report’s global perspective, the work will draw heavily on the skills and perspectives of leading experts and stakeholders from around the world. As with all Foresight reports, the Foresight Global Food and Farming Futures report will seek to apply leading scientific and other evidence and futures analysis to identify critical issues and their consequences, and to identify and analyse possible policies and interventions for addressing those challenges.

Please RSVP to James Birch on [birchj@parliament.uk](mailto:birchj@parliament.uk) <<mailto:birchj@parliament.uk>>

### **Leveraging Agriculture for Improving Nutrition and Health**

*Date:* February 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011

*Location:* New Delhi, India

Agriculture impacts poor people’s nutrition and health, and people’s nutrition and health in turn affects their productivity. As a supplier of food, a source of income, and an engine of growth, agriculture has the potential to significantly and sustainably improve poor people’s nutrition and health. This conference will inform,

influence, and catalyze action to better use investments in agriculture to achieve nutrition security and good health for the world's poor people.

<http://www.ifpri.org/2020-agriculture-nutrition-health>

### **USDA's 2011 Agricultural Outlook Forum: Today's Strategies & Tomorrow's Opportunities**

*Date:* February 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011

*Location:* Arlington, VA

Secretary Tom Vilsack will deliver the Forum's keynote address followed by a distinguished speaker. Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan will deliver the Forum's welcome. Chief Economist Joseph Glauber will discuss the Domestic and Foreign Agricultural Economic Outlooks. Plenary and session speakers will be announced in the near future. Twenty-five breakout sessions will focus on a broad range of topical issues related to risk management, foreign trade and domestic markets, rural communities, conservation and the environment, renewable energy, broadband, nutrition and food safety, dietary guidelines, land tenure issues, and sustainability. The Forum also will feature traditional commodity and supply and demand outlook sessions.

<http://www.usda.gov/oce/forum/>

### **Getting Down to Business: Building Partnerships to Expand African Agricultural Development**

*Date:* March 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011

*Location:* Washington, DC

The Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa is pleased to announce the third annual US-Africa Forum.

<http://www.partnership-africa.org/content/getting-down-business-building-partnerships-expand-african-agricultural-development>

### **COMESA Investment Forum 2011**

*Date:* March 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 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)

### **19<sup>th</sup> Annual Food and Ag Policy Conference**

*Date:* April 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 12<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://Greenbiz.com) who has appeared on NBC, ABC, CNN and NPR.

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

### **Second World Conference of Humanitarian Studies**

*Date:* June 2<sup>nd</sup> – June 5<sup>th</sup>, 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/>

### **Leland Hunger Fellows Program – Now Accepting Applications**

The Leland International Hunger Fellows Program is now accepting applications for the 6<sup>th</sup> class (2011-2013). Information on the fellowship and how to apply is accessible here:

<http://www.hungercenter.org/international/international.cfm>. Applications can be submitted online from now through January 7, 2011 at: <http://www.hungercenter.org/international/apply/>.

### **Chicago Council Job Announcement: Project Manager/Lead Researcher, Agriculture & Health**

The Chicago Council is accepting applications for a Project Manager/Lead Researcher position to support a new initiative exploring the linkages between shifting agricultural and food production trends, food availability, and the rise in non-communicable diseases. For a full position description and how to apply, please visit: [http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/chicago\\_council\\_career\\_details.php?career\\_id=41](http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/chicago_council_career_details.php?career_id=41)

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## **AGRICULTURAL ISSUES**

### Reports:

#### **State of the World 2011: Innovations that Nourish the Planet**, *Worldwatch Institute, January 12*

The report provides a roadmap for increased agricultural investment and more-efficient ways to alleviate global hunger and poverty. Drawing from the world's leading agricultural experts and from hundreds of innovations that are already working on the ground, the report outlines 15 proven, environmentally sustainable prescriptions.

<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/6567>

#### **SEE ALSO: World Hunger Best Cured by Small-Scale Agriculture**, *Guardian, January 13*

A move from industrial farming towards local food projects is our healthiest, most sustainable choice, says Worldwatch Institute.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jan/13/world-hunger-small-scale-agriculture>

#### **SEE ALSO: 15 Innovations in Sustainable Food**, *Atlantic, January 14*

By "innovations," Worldwatch means agriculture-based methods that have been shown to prevent food waste, help resist climate change, and promote urban farming. The report describes 15 such innovations, all of them environmentally sustainable.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/food/archive/2011/01/15-innovations-in-sustainable-food/69403/>

#### **Agrimonde: Scenarios and Challenges for Feeding the World in 2050**, *INRA and CIRAD, 2010*

The 21st century faces a triple challenge in terms of agriculture and food: food security, environmental conservation, and a shortage of fossil fuels. With this in mind, INRA and CIRAD launched the initiative, in 2006, to develop a foresight project for analysing issues pertaining to the world's food and agricultural

systems on the 2050 timeline. This book provides a synthetic presentation of the main conclusions that this foresight project has yielded.

<http://www.cirad.fr/en/news/all-news-items/articles/2010/ca-vient-de-sortir/agrimonde>

**Assessing the Impact of Increased Global Food Prices on the Poor**, *IFPRI, January 2011*

The FAO's recent statement that world food prices reached a record high in December 2010 has raised the specter of another global food crisis. This scenario has serious implications for the developing world, and raises several questions regarding Africa in particular. What impact did the 2007–08 global price spike have on Sub-Saharan Africa? More specifically, to what degree do changes in world food markets influence the price of staple foods in the region? Project findings suggest that African governments can reduce their countries' vulnerability to external food shocks by investing in agricultural research, pursuing more predictable economic policies, facilitating grain trade, and promoting diversification in staple consumption.

<http://www.ifpri.org/blog/assessing-impact-increased-global-food-prices-poor>

Media Articles:

**How Can We Feed 9 Billion?**, *Telegraph, January 14*

The world's population is set to soar in the coming decades – but food supplies are already under pressure. Meanwhile, Britain and Europe have turned their backs on a great agricultural revolution. If the food supply is wobbling now, most people prefer not to think about what it could be like in 2050. By then, there will be another 2.5 billion open mouths, as the global population bursts its corset and balloons outwards by 70 per cent. Will they have anything to eat? Can agriculture almost double its capacity? If everybody on the planet farmed as we do in Europe, the answer would probably be no.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/8258167/How-can-we-feed-9-billion.html>

**Food Security a Concern for South Sudan**, *UPI, January 13*

Food security in South Sudan is getting better, though people returning in the wake of a secession referendum could jeopardize that trend, a U.N. report said. A WFP report with the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization found that gains in food security could be reversed because of increased food prices and regional conflict.

[http://www.upi.com/Science\\_News/Resource-Wars/2011/01/13/Food-security-a-concern-for-South-Sudan/UPI-46971294931527/](http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2011/01/13/Food-security-a-concern-for-South-Sudan/UPI-46971294931527/)

**We Need to Help Smallholder Farmers Become a Bigger Part of the Solution to Food Security**, *IFAD, January 13*

In many developing countries a majority of smallholder farmers are net food buyers, and rural households make up a substantial majority of the world's 900 million-plus hungry. Helping smallholders to increase their productivity and marketed supply is thus perhaps the most important thing that can be done to reduce the number of hungry people in the world. Yet we also know that many smallholder farmers are facing growing difficulties – soil erosion, declining soil fertility, salination of arable lands, growing scarcity of water, and increasingly volatile and uncertain weather patterns – and these are undermining agricultural production in large parts of the developing world.

<http://ifad-un.blogspot.com/2011/01/we-need-to-help-smallholder-farmers.html>

**New Research Scheme Eyes Increased Food Security in Developing World**, *Devex, January 12*

Several donors have teamed up for an innovative research initiative that aims to improve food security in developing countries. The U.K. Department for International Development, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Indian Department of Biotechnology have contributed USD32 million toward the Sustainable Crop Production Research for International Development Initiative. The project aims to back “high-quality basic and strategic biological and biotechnological research” that can help boost the production of major food crops in the developing world within the next five to 10 years.

<http://www.devex.com/en/blogs/the-development-newswire/new-research-scheme-eyes-increased-food-security-in-developing-world?g=1>

**Farm Reform, Biotech are Key to Feeding World by 2050**, *Agence France-Presse, January 12*

Massive changes in farming practices, eating habits and consumption will be needed to feed Earth's population sustainably when it hits nine billion in 2050, French scientists warned on Wednesday. In under 40 years, the world will have to make farming more productive but less dependent on harmful chemicals, curb food losses and waste, protect the environment and reduce agriculture's exposure to disastrous price swings, they said.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jrVn2psv5DMhCMIXpJjV-29hllqg?docId=CNG.966bf3d40909860faa12697e6b737d6e.511>

**Put Science to Work in Battle for Food Security**, *Opinion Letter, Mr. Lloyd Le Page, Chief Executive, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, Financial Times, January 11*

Thanks to the innovative and tireless efforts of agricultural researchers during the second half of the last century, leading to the development and widespread adoption of hundreds of improved crop seeds together with better farming practices, food prices were kept low and relatively stable for more than three decades. Containing food price inflation today may prove more difficult than before because of climate change and other growing threats, such as that of water scarcity. But agricultural science is rapidly rising to these challenges, with the benefit of more powerful tools and stronger partnerships for putting new knowledge to work.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/06e4ebbc-1d18-11e0-b597-00144feab49a.html#axzz1Aq8HG5XY>

**Resistant Seed Helps Mali Farmers Battle Climate Change**, *Reuters, January 11*

New varieties of seeds developed to withstand the effects of climate change have breathed new life into Malian crop cultivation, farmers say. Mali's climate has been changing since at least the early 1980s. Increasingly severe droughts, rainfall shortages and deforestation have robbed large parts of the country of fertile land and forced farmers to abandon some crops. But farmers can now return to valuable cereals like sorghum, thanks to the benefits of scientific research.

<http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/resistant-seed-helps-mali-farmers-battling-climate-change>

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**FOREIGN ASSISTANCE**

Media Articles:

**A Conservative Case for the International Affairs Budget**, *U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, January 13*

Well-known conservative commentator Rich Galen posted a new blog entry yesterday, describing his travels in Kenya and Tanzania. Galen is traveling with other political pundits on a trip led by ONE, with stops at a variety of International Affairs Budget-funded programs, including a research center run by the U.S. Army and a Centers for Disease Control project working to combat AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. On his journey, Galen saw effective International Affairs programs in action. A self-described skeptic, he encourages his fellow conservatives to look at the results, quoting a man in Nairobi who said that funding provided through the PEPFAR program first started by President George W. Bush had saved his life. Galen writes, "I have learned that what I thought had been set of programs to toss money over the transom at Uganda and other African nations, I now see as an investment in what may someday become a vibrant, growing economic engine."

<http://www.usglc.org/2011/01/13/a-conservative-case-for-the-international-affairs-budget/>

**African Development Bank Maintained its Robust Commitment to Africa's Economic Development**, *AllAfrica, January 13*

When President Donald Kaberuka welcomed the Board of Directors in January 2010, he sounded a strong note that "the year would be extremely challenging as the Bank needed to mobilize additional capital for both the African Development Bank (AfDB) and African Development Fund (ADF) at a moment of scarce resources". In 2010, initial estimates total annual lending already indicated nearly USD 6.5 billion, of which nearly two-thirds of the commitments were core operational areas relating to infrastructure. Even if the final annual figures fall short of the performance in 2009, 2010 was a year of operational consolidation, with additional resource mobilization for both the AfDB and ADF being the keynotes of the year.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201101130964.html>

**UN Prepares for Anti-Poverty Conference in Turkey**, *Bloomberg*, January 11

A UN official says an upcoming high-level conference on poverty must address the new challenges the world's poorest face due to increased globalization. Representatives from the 48 poorest countries in the world and rich donor nations are meeting at the United Nations this week ahead of the Fourth U.N. Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Istanbul from May 9-13.

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9KM92N83.htm>

**Ten Zero-Cost Ideas for Development Progress in 2011**, *Center for Global Development*, January 6

In our ever-more-global system the rich and powerful can have the largest impacts for good through global cooperation on collective action problems. (Think climate change, avoiding food and oil price hikes, minimizing global financial panics.) But global cooperation is becoming harder than ever to manage. Since World War II, the United States has led or at the very least been a willing follower. But the United States, gridlocked on key issues and preoccupied with a jobless recovery, seems less and less able and willing to lead. Given rising concern about U.S. fiscal deficits, I've focused here on wishes that cost nothing in budget terms (though many of them do require political will and the attention of senior policymakers, both of which are scarcer than dollars). One wish comes with a \$10 billion price tag, but also with a suggestion on how the money could be raised, making the entire list zero cost.

[http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/2011/01/10-zero-cost-ideas-for-development-progress-in-2011.php?utm\\_source=nl\\_weekly&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=nl\\_weekly\\_01112011](http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/2011/01/10-zero-cost-ideas-for-development-progress-in-2011.php?utm_source=nl_weekly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=nl_weekly_01112011)

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**ENVIRONMENT (WATER/CLIMATE)**

Reports:

**Design Challenges for the Green Climate Fund**, *Overseas Development Institute*, January 2011

One of the achievements of the UNFCCC negotiations in Cancun was the decision to establish a Green Climate Fund (GCF). Many are looking to the establishment of this fund as the solution to adequately and appropriately address climate finance; others caution that ambitious steps need to be taken to avoid the 'Green Fund' turning out to be an 'Empty Fund' whose function is limited to attaining the buy-in of developing countries into a binding international climate policy regime.

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=5256&title=design-challenges-green-climate-fund>

Media Articles:

**Farming Subsidies Face 'Green' Reform**, *Telegraph*, January 14

Farmers will be expected to do more to protect the environment in future if they want to pick up European subsidies, Caroline Spelman, the Environment Secretary, has warned. In a speech to the Oxford Farming Conference, Mrs Spelman will set out the UK's position on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In the past the scheme has been criticised for allowing 'grain mountains and butter lakes'. But from 2013 'greening' of the system will transform the agricultural landscape of Europe. Mrs Spelman said in future the subsidies should be more focused on 'public good' so that farmers are paid for looking after the landscape, in addition to a basic rate of income support.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthnews/8236007/Farming-subsidies-face-green-reform.html>

**World Agriculture Threatened by Water Gluttony**, *Agence France-Presse*, January 13

World agriculture employs more than one billion people but is in trouble because it's the biggest consumer of ever scarcer water and a huge producer of greenhouse gas emissions, a new report said Wednesday.

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gUaoNeYMX8im\\_6v69jX5F9hdcCVg?docId=CNG.966bf3d40909860faa12697e6b737d6e.4f1](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gUaoNeYMX8im_6v69jX5F9hdcCVg?docId=CNG.966bf3d40909860faa12697e6b737d6e.4f1)

**Natural Disasters Could Make Food Market Volatile**, *National*, January 12

Bad weather, growing demand and market speculators drove up the price of food in 2010 and the cost may well keep rising, analysts say. Experts are warning that further food-supply disruptions this year could trigger more price rises around the world and in Arab regions. Analysts say countries need to develop

strategies to dramatically increase global food production to meet the growing challenges of increased demand in developing nations, population growth and global warming.

<http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/natural-disasters-could-make-food-market-volatile>

**Region Warned to Address Water Woes**, *Financial Times*, January 12

Weeks of rioting in Tunisia and Algeria have propelled rising food prices and weak labour markets to the top of the agenda in the Arab world. Yet inflation and unemployment, which lie at the heart of protesters' concerns, are only likely to be exacerbated by increasing water scarcity in the region, according to a recent study.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/5401f338-1e6f-11e0-87d2-00144feab49a.html#axzz1AyHBcRU5>

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## **WOMEN & GIRLS**

### Media Articles:

**Town Hall with Omani Civil Society**, *Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State, U.S. State Department*, January 12

So what we want is for societies to support women being able to go in and out of the workforce, because there's a tremendous amount of talent in 50 percent of the population. So I would like to see more support for young mothers so that they can concentrate on being the best mothers to their young children as possible. I'd like to see opportunities for women to continue their education, even when they're raising their family, and I'd like to see more opportunities for women to combine family responsibilities, particularly motherhood, with outside employment if that is what they choose or they need. Because certainly, when we have these discussions among people like ourselves who are educated and very privileged, we forget that every day in every society, millions and millions of women have no choice.

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/01/154542.htm>

**Dalit Women's Aspirations Brought Home Impact of 'Double Discrimination'**, *Guardian*, January 11

Over 260 million people worldwide continue to suffer from caste discrimination, one of the most severe and forgotten human rights abuses that still persists in several countries. In Bangladesh, there are around 5 million Dalits living in extreme poverty, deprived of adequate housing, healthcare, education, sanitation and transport. Inspiring community organisers such as Moni Rani Das, coordinator and founder of the Dalit Women's Forum, remind us that change is possible. After organising within initially resistant communities and lobbying dismissive public authorities, Moni says that the lives of Dalit women are now changing, and the Bangladeshi government is beginning to listen.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jan/11/bangladesh-women>

**Sweden Invests in Strengthening Role of African Women Farmers in Food Production to Achieve Food Security**, *CAADP*, January 5

Sweden's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Nairobi-based Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) announced today a new partnership to invest US \$8 million to accelerate AGRA's effort to improve markets, soils and access to high-yield crop varieties for smallholder farmers, particularly women farmers.

<http://www.caadp.net/news/?p=942>

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## **MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE ISSUES**

### Reports:

**Structural Change, Global Imbalances, and Employment in the Least Developed Countries**,

*International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development*, January 2011

This paper addresses the effects of changes in the level and composition of global demand, and especially of global rebalancing, on trade flows and employment from a demand perspective. It emphasizes that these effects depend on the relative importance of rich and poor countries, as well as of different components of aggregate demand, in global growth. These effects, in turn, affect export opportunities of all countries, including the LDCs, as well as structural change and employment opportunities in their economies. The paper

finally draws policy implications to ensure adequate and balanced global demand, which are indispensable for sustained income growth in all countries and especially in LDCs.

<http://ictsd.org/i/publications/99142/>

#### Media Articles:

#### **Food Prices Can't Just be Swept Under the Table**, *Guardian*, January 13

Soaring food prices threaten more unrest and must prompt a global rethink about agriculture and investment. Food prices is an issue likely to dominate the global news agenda this year. President Nicolas Sarkozy – in Washington this week in his new role as chairman of the G20 – has put volatile food prices high on his agenda of reform of global economic governance. The French prime minister, François Fillon, said a priority was to find a collective response to "excessive volatility". France has asked the World Bank to undertake urgent research into the impact of rising food prices. This is continuing work initiated by its predecessors, South Korea, on improving global co-operation to resolve food security issues.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/jan/13/rising-food-prices-global-rethink>

#### **Prices Soar on Crop Woes**, *Wall Street Journal*, January 13

Evidence of tightening global food supplies grew as the U.S. Agriculture Department cut its estimates for global harvests of key crops and raised some demand forecasts, adding to worries about rising food prices.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704803604576077751817700340.html?KEYWORDS=agriculture>

#### **The State of American Business**, *U.S. Chamber of Commerce*, January 11

Another key priority for the Chamber is to create jobs by advancing a pro-America trade agenda that doubles exports in five years, and doubles them again in the five years after that. Last year, we heard a lot of talk about expanding trade but we didn't see much action. We have a good bipartisan opportunity to change that in 2011. A year ago, the Chamber released a study which warned that the United States will lose more than 380,000 existing jobs and \$40 billion in export sales if we fail to implement our pending Free Trade Agreements, while within months, the EU and Canada will move ahead with theirs. The administration must work urgently with the new Congress to approve the FTAs with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama. We will pull out all the stops to help get the votes.

<http://www.uschamber.com/press/speeches/2011/state-american-business-2011>

#### **Heat Wave Stokes Jump in Corn**, *Wall Street Journal*, January 11

Corn futures surged as a heat wave threatened Argentina, raising expectations U.S. government forecasters will cut their crop estimate for the South American country later this week.

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704458204576074293803890616.html?mod=ITP\\_money\\_andinvesting\\_6](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704458204576074293803890616.html?mod=ITP_money_andinvesting_6)

#### **Africa Can Ride Out Food Price Surge this Time**, *Reuters*, January 10

The United Nations may have sounded the alarm about soaring global food prices, but in Africa a string of bumper harvests and a changing diet means the political fallout may be more muted than to past price bumps. On the financial side, a little bit of inflation will help push up domestic debt yields in the region's frontier markets, making bonds more attractive to foreigners and thereby giving currencies a boost. But in contrast to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's global food index hitting 2008 crisis levels last week, maize, Africa's predominant staple, is showing few signs of stress, suggesting a repeat of the unrest of two years ago on the continent is unlikely.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE7090AM20110110>

#### **Food Price Rise Fueling Inflation**, *Reuters*, January 10

Rising food prices are stoking global inflation with many agricultural commodity markets driven higher by bad weather in key producing countries, a senior trader at JP Morgan said Monday. High food prices have moved to the top of policymakers' agendas because of worries about the impact on inflation, protectionism and unrest.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE7094P020110110>

**Rising Imports Help Cut China's Surplus**, *Financial Times*, January 10

China recorded its smallest trade surplus in nine months in December as export growth slowed and imports to feed the booming domestic economy surged ahead. The country's trade surplus in December was \$13.1bn, well below economists' predictions and November's \$22.9bn surplus, according to Chinese customs data. The shrinking surplus is partly explained by higher prices of the commodities and raw materials China imports to power its growth.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1e280dee-1c74-11e0-9b56-00144feab49a.html?ftcamp=rss&ftcamp=crm/email/2011110/nbe/WorldNews/product#axzz1Aq8HG5XY>

**Seoul Plans US Grain Trading House**, *Financial Times*, January 10

South Korea is planning to set up a state-led grain trading company in Chicago in the latest sign of concern among some governments about the cost and reliability of food supplies. Seoul hopes its trading company could buy up to 30 per cent of Korea's grain needs by 2020, purchasing directly from US farmers.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b69c63dc-1ceb-11e0-8c86-00144feab49a.html?ftcamp=crm/email/2011111/nbe/AsiaPacificBusiness/product#axzz1Aq8HG5XY>

**Farmers, Budget Hawks Eye \$5 Billion Per Year Agriculture Subsidy**, *Reuters*, January 9

A direct payment subsidy that guarantees farmers \$5 billion a year is the most prominent target in agriculture's complex web of subsidies as budget-cutting Republicans flex their new legislative muscle in the House of Representatives. Created in 1996, the subsidy is a point of dispute in farm country. Some farm groups want Congress to eliminate direct payments as part of an overhaul of farm policy due next year while others would keep it.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE7082ND20110109?feedType=RSS&feedName=everything&virtualBrandChannel=11563>

**Reefers Hit by Rise of Container Shipping**, *Financial Times*, January 9

The world's refrigerated ship fleet is set to shrink by up to a half during the next decade as a new generation of container ships transforms how fruit, meat and other perishable foods move around the globe. Port and shipping line executives have told the Financial Times they expect a gradual shift away from systems built around traditional reefer ships, where food sits on pallets in a refrigerated hold and is delivered to a cold store on arrival. They are instead designing systems to handle goods in containers with refrigeration units.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/16e0c232-1c11-11e0-9b56-00144feab49a.html?ftcamp=crm/email/2011110/nbe/AsiaPacificBusiness/product#axzz1Aq8HG5XY>

**Developing Nations Fight Inflation**, *Wall Street Journal*, January 8

Inflation is spreading across the world's largest emerging nations, leaving a noisy rattle in what have been the engines of global growth in recent years. Central banks in Brazil, Russia, India and China, the fast-growing so-called BRIC nations now responsible for nearly a fifth of global economic activity, have all raised interest rates in recent weeks, and are testing more exotic measures to stanch rising prices, especially for food: India and Russia banned exports of onions and wheat, respectively, while China has promised price controls on items such as cooking oil.

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704739504576068171365313408.html?mod=dist\\_smart\\_brief](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704739504576068171365313408.html?mod=dist_smart_brief)

**UN Warns Record Food Prices Put Millions at Risk**, *Agence France-Presse*, January 8

The United Nations warned Friday millions of people are at risk after global food prices hit their highest level ever, as clashes over rising prices erupted in Algeria this week. Surging prices for cooking oil, cereal and sugar in particular, "will affect millions of people," Abdolreza Abbassian, an economist at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome, told AFP.

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALEqM5i405JBUl3uapmYHvtR970\\_GnY2Nw?docId=CNG.dfd1843a9cc600850b4d12dd7048131d.581](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALEqM5i405JBUl3uapmYHvtR970_GnY2Nw?docId=CNG.dfd1843a9cc600850b4d12dd7048131d.581)

**Farmers Wanted**, *Financial Times*, January 7

Food prices are rising again, but the world need not panic – yet. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, we are experiencing a “shock” rather than another crisis of the sort that struck in 2007. Higher prices are not something to be scared of. Indeed, they are a necessary precondition to make supply catch up with demand. More investment is required in the agricultural sector to meet booming consumption, and increased prices should stimulate this.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/48daeed8-1a9b-11e0-b100-00144feab49a.html#axzz1Aq8HG5XY>

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**AGRIBUSINESS**

Media Articles:

**GM Chickens Boost Hopes on Avian Flu**, *Financial Times*, January 13

Scientists have genetically modified chickens to prevent the transmission of avian influenza, an innovation that could cut the risk of a lethal strain crossing to the human population and boost the poultry industry. The chickens created at Cambridge and Edinburgh universities produce a genetic “decoy” molecule that mimics part of the replication machinery of the flu virus. This diverts the enzyme required for the virus to pass between cells – and stops the infection.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/fe8c66a4-1f45-11e0-8c1c-00144feab49a.html?ftcamp=rss&ftcamp=crm/email/2011114/nbe/WorldNews/product#axzz1B1cFToZ3>

**Drought-Tolerant Maize Gets US Debut**, *Nature*, January 11

Seed companies race to tap multibillion-dollar market. When the planting season arrives later this year, farmers in the United States will have a new way to safeguard their crops from drought. Last week, DuPont subsidiary Pioneer Hi-Bred International, headquartered in Johnston, Iowa, announced plans to release a series of hybrid maize (corn) strains that can flourish with less water. The seeds will compete with another maize strain unveiled last July by Swiss agribusiness Syngenta. Both companies used conventional breeding rather than genetic engineering to produce their seeds.

<http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110111/full/469144a.html>

**China Spends \$2.4 Billion...On Pesticides?**, *Wall Street Journal*, January 11

State-owned China National Chemical Group, or ChemChina for short, signed a \$2.4 billion deal over the weekend to acquire Israel’s Makhteshim Agan Group, the world’s largest maker of generic pesticides. So why is China—already the world’s largest user, producer and exporter of pesticides—interested in this deal? One explanation is that China is simply hungry for a big agribusiness deal to rinse away the bad aftertaste of the failed Potash and CSR deals.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2011/01/11/china-spends-24-billion-on-pesticides/>

**DuPont to Buy Danisco for \$5.8 Billion**, *Financial Times*, January 10

DuPont of the US has agreed to buy Danisco of Denmark in a \$5.8bn recommended deal that strengthens its presence in the food ingredient and enzyme markets. The acquisition reflects a push by DuPont to increase its exposure to the food and nutrition industry amid rising global demand, particularly from emerging markets. Danisco makes additives such as sweeteners and emulsifiers for a range of foods, drinks and animal feeds as well as enzymes for detergents and industrial processes.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a5e3bf4e-1c88-11e0-a106-00144feab49a.html?ftcamp=rss&ftcamp=crm/email/2011110/nbe/USMorningHeadlines/product#axzz1Aq8HG5XY>

**Seed of Change**, *Economist*, January 6

Since farmers first planted GM soya in 1996, engineered crops have steadily conquered America’s vast farmland. Last year 93% of cotton and soya acres contained genetically engineered crops, as did 86% of corn acres. In the past the Agriculture Department (USDA) has placed relatively meagre limits on this expansion. This month, however, that may change. Alfalfa, that humble feedstuff, is at the heart of an intense debate. The USDA will soon decide how to regulate Roundup Ready alfalfa, engineered by Monsanto to resist a chemical used to kill weeds. The department may allow GM alfalfa but, for the first time, set strict rules on the extent of

planting allowed. This could be a model for the future, the biggest policy change for GM crops since their introduction.

[http://www.economist.com/node/17855118?story\\_id=17855118](http://www.economist.com/node/17855118?story_id=17855118)

*Banner Photograph: © Ray Witlin / World Bank*