

GLOBAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE WEEKLY NEWS BRIEF OF THE GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



July 31st – August 7th, 2009

Agricultural development news surrounding Secretary Clinton's visit to Africa is covered in a special edition of *Global Food for Thought*. To receive a copy, please contact Lisa Eakman (leakman@thechicagocouncil.org).

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KEY ARTICLES

Farmers Can Feed the World, *By Norman Borlaug, The Wall Street Journal, July 30*

Earlier this month in L'Aquila, Italy, a small town recently devastated by an earthquake, leaders of the G-8 countries pledged \$20 billion over three years for farm-investment aid that will help resource-poor farmers get access to tools like better seed and fertilizer and help poor nations feed themselves. For those of us who have spent our lives working in agriculture, focusing on growing food versus giving it away is a giant step forward.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203517304574304562754043656.html>

Secretary Clinton's Africa Trip: The broader context of U.S. Policy, *CSIS, August 5*

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's Africa trip, August 3 to 14, features a tough and demanding agenda: she will be visiting dangerously conflicted Kenya, Congo, and Nigeria; holding a brief exchange with a Somali transition government close to succumbing to a radical Islamist movement affiliated with al Qaeda; reassuring unsteady postwar Liberia; and opening a dialogue with a newly formed government in South Africa, which confronts worsening internal economic strains and remains visibly befuddled by the continuing crisis in neighboring Zimbabwe. The secretary's agenda bears little resemblance to President Bill Clinton's

spring 1998 Africa renaissance tour or the similarly optimistic tones of President George W. Bush's summer 2003 and spring 2008 trips

<http://smartglobalhealth.org/blog/entry/secretary-clintons-africa-trip-the-broader-context-of-u.s.-policy/>

Leadership Vacancy Raises Fears About USAID's Future, *The Washington Post*, August 5

As Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton begins a seven-country African trip with a visit to Kenya, the main U.S. foreign aid agency is in limbo, entering its seventh month without a permanent director despite pledges by the Obama administration to expand development assistance and improve its effectiveness in poor countries.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/04/AR2009080403373_pf.html

See Also: Concerns Mount About Foreign Aid Vacancy, *CQ Politics*, August 5

Paul Farmer, the leading candidate to head the U.S. Agency for International Development, is no longer in the running for the job, according to several Hill aides and people in the foreign aid community.

<http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=5&docID=cqmidday-000003187503>

See Also : U.S. aid agency could lose autonomy, *United Press International*, August 5

The U.S. Agency for International Development is in danger of being swallowed up by the state department and losing its autonomy, observers say. The agency has been without a permanent director for seven months now and its full-time staff has shrunk by 40 percent over the past decade, USA Today reported Wednesday.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2009/08/05/USaid-agency-could-lose-autonomy/UPI-84371249484337/

See Also: Paul Farmer out for USAID?, *The Cable (Foreign Policy)*, August 4

Several Hill and Washington foreign policy hands say they are hearing from the White House that Paul Farmer is out as a candidate to lead USAID, a decision that was said to have been made at the White House. It wasn't clear what the reason was, and a representative of Farmer's group, Partners in Health, couldn't immediately be reached.

http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/08/04/paul_farmer_out_for_usaid

FAO initiates debate on declaration for World Summit on Food Security, *FAO*, July 31

FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf has invited governments around the world to participate in negotiations to agree on a declaration for adoption by the World Summit of Heads of State and Government on Food Security, to take place from 16 to 18 November 2009 in Rome.

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/29219/icode/>

See Also: Secretariat contribution to defining the objectives and possible decisions of the World Summit on Food Security, *FAO*

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Secretariat_Contribution_for_Summit%20.pdf

See Also: Saudi Arabia to fund FAO World Food Security Summit, *FAO*, July 30

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/29165/icode/>

Army Farmers Work to Regrow Afghanistan, *Wired*, August 3

U.S. assistance to Afghanistan often arrives in the form of cash, disbursed to local contractors through the Commander's Emergency Response Program. But it also comes in the form of fertilizer spreaders, pesticide sprayers, shovels and rakes — and Midwestern common sense. Perhaps nothing exemplifies the "Peace Corps with guns" approach to Afghanistan more than the U.S. Army's Agribusiness Development Teams, or ADTs.

<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/08/army-farmers-work-to-regrow-afghanistan/>

Food for thought, *The Daily Star (Bangladesh)*, August 5

Every year over 20 million children in the developing world die from malnutrition -- the single biggest contributor to child mortality. Today, the number of undernourished people in the world is close to one billion, and nowhere is this problem bigger than in South Asia. Astonishingly, 45% of South Asian children are undernourished. Both underweight and stunting (short height for age) rates in the region are much higher than that of anywhere else, including Sub-Saharan Africa. The impact of poor nutrition can be devastating and is largely irreversible.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=100120>

AGOA and Agriculture, *The International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council and The Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa*, August 2009

This brief will provide a background on African food and agricultural exports to the US, and suggest ways in which these could be increased both through improvements to the preference scheme and changes to other facets of US policy.

<http://africanhunger.org/uploads/articles/e67c4dad7042272bfe229c98ea449dde.pdf>

Little Keeps Nigeria From a Crisis of Hunger, *The Washington Post*, August 2

The nation blessed with Africa's largest oil reserves and some of its most fertile lands has a problem. It cannot feed its 140 million people, and relatively minor reductions in rainfall could set off a regional food catastrophe, experts say.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/02/AR2009080202091.html>

RELEVANT U.S. ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Veteran South Asia hand joins Holbrooke's team as Pakistan aid coordinator, *The Cable (Foreign Policy)*, August 6

Robin Raphel, who under the Clinton administration was the first U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, is joining Richard Holbrooke's team to become the coordinator for nonmilitary aid to Pakistan, State Department officials confirmed to *Foreign Policy*.

http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/08/05/veteran_south_asia_hand_joins_holbrookes_team_as_pakistan_non_military_aid_coordinator

"A New Approach to Safeguarding Americans", *Remarks by John O. Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, Center for Strategic and International Studies*, August 6

"To confront the transnational threats of the 21st Century, he has launched new initiatives: strengthening the global non-proliferation regime; promoting food security that fights world hunger and lifts people around the world out of poverty... And we are harnessing our economic power to make substantial increases in foreign assistance generally—including poverty reduction, global health, and food security—not as a crutch for societies in need, but as a catalyst for development, good governance, and long-term prosperity."

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-John-Brennan-at-the-Center-for-Strategic-and-International-Studies/

See Also: **Sustainable Security 101**, *Center for American Progress*

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/08/pdf/ss101.pdf>

The Vision Thing: Barack Obama's plans for Africa are not nearly as ambitious as George W. Bush's were, *Newsweek*, August 5

President George W. Bush's administration, for all its flaws, truly brought to change to Africa through its PEPFAR program, which injected billions of dollars of money into nearly every aspect of the fight against HIV/AIDS, from prevention to critical antiretroviral (ARV) treatment programs.

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/210665>

Climate Change Policy: Preliminary Observations on Options for Distributing Emissions Allowances and Revenue under a Cap-and-Trade Program, *Statement of John Stephenson, Director Natural Resources & Environment, U.S. Government Accountability Office*, August 4

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09950t.pdf>

For Senate, a Climate of Competing Interests, *The Washington Post*, August 4

Some key senators seem to be treating the House's compromises as a starting place for more. "What they did, we'll keep," said Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. But on top of that,

Harkin said, "We're going to maybe do some other things that would maybe embellish what they did in the House."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/03/AR2009080302982.html>

House bill's land use unsettles farming, food costs, *Philip Brasher, Des Moines Register, August 2*

Forget the food-vs.-fuel debate for a while. The new issue is carbon vs. food. How this debate plays out could go a long way to deciding the fate of the Obama administration's effort to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. The debate over a House-passed climate bill has focused on how much it will raise energy costs, including the cost of farming. When the Senate returns this fall to write its version of the bill, attention will turn to the impact on food prices.

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20090802/BUSINESS03/908020317/1029/BUSINESS>

Who'd a Thunk It? Bipartisan Consensus on Foreign Aid, *Sheila Herrling, Huffington Post, July 31*

Amidst a month of partisan battles on Capitol Hill over a Supreme Court nominee, health care and financial regulation, a new bill was introduced this week that rose above party lines: the Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009 (S. 1524). Senators Kerry, Lugar, Menendez, Corker, Risch and Cardin—three Democrats and three Republicans—introduced the bill as "a first step toward comprehensive reform of U.S. foreign assistance," showing they are ready, willing and able to work with the administration on a set of deeper reforms..

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sheila-herrling/whod-a-thunk-it-bipartisa_b_249024.html

NEW REPORTS/POLICY BRIEFS/BOOKS

Declining global per capita agricultural production and warming oceans threaten food security, *Chris C. Funk & Molly E. Brown, Food Security, July 2009*

Despite accelerating globalization, most people still eat food that is grown locally. Developing countries with weak purchasing power tend to import as little food as possible from global markets, suffering consumption deficits during times of high prices or production declines. Local agricultural production, therefore, is critical to both food security and economic development among the rural poor.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/fw645377u3587404/fulltext.pdf>

Climate change, flooding and food security in South Asia, *Ian Douglas, Food Security, July 2009*

The most vulnerable groups in terms of food security during floods in south Asia under climate change will be the poor, women and children. Current procedures for the transfer of climate adaptation funds tend to marginalize these groups. Food production is being disrupted by flooding more frequently and more severely than before, due to climate change. By 2080 the situation is likely to be much worse than at present.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/e78w7k3x0460270x/fulltext.pdf>

Price stabilization, international trade and national cereal stocks: world price shocks and policy response in South Asia, *Paul Dorosh, Food Security, July 2009*

The sharp rise in international cereal prices in 2007 and 2008 had a profound impact on food security at national levels for net importing countries, sharply raising the cost of imports. Domestic trade policies and government market interventions in a set of South Asian countries have been critical, however, in determining the effects of the international price shocks on domestic markets.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/a345358322705h05/fulltext.pdf>

Too poor to grow, *World Bank, August 2009*

The paper's strategy involves including poverty indicators among the explanatory variables in an otherwise standard empirical growth equation. Using a large panel dataset, the authors find that poverty has a negative impact on growth that is significant both statistically and economically.

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/08/05/000158349_20090805131938/Rendered/PDF/WPS5012.pdf

The trade response to global downturns : historical evidence, *World Bank, August 2009*

The author examines the impact of historical global downturns on trade flows. The results provide insight into why trade has dropped so dramatically in the current crisis, what is likely to happen in the coming years, how global imbalances are affected, and which regions and industries suffer most heavily.

[http://www-](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/08/06/000158349_20090806152233/Rendered/PDF/WPS5015.pdf)

[wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/08/06/000158349_20090806152233/Rendered/PDF/WPS5015.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/08/06/000158349_20090806152233/Rendered/PDF/WPS5015.pdf)

Impacts of Climate Change Review on Marine Organisms and Ecosystems, *Andrew S. Brierley and Michael J. Kingsford, Current Biology, August 2009*

<http://download.cell.com/current-biology/pdf/PIIS0960982209011816.pdf?intermediate=true>

See Also: Scientists claim planet is heading for 'irreversible' climate change by 2040, Scotland On Sunday, August 2

Carbon dioxide levels are rising at a faster rate than the worst-case scenario envisaged by United Nations experts, with the planet heading for "catastrophic" and "irreversible" climate change by 2040, a new report claims.

<http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/scotland/Scientists-claim-planet-is-heading.5515749.jp>

Market information and food insecurity response analysis, *Christopher B. Barrett & Robert Bell & Erin C. Lentz & Daniel G. Maxwell, Food Security, July 2009*

Food aid is no longer the only, or even the dominant, response to widespread food insecurity. Donors, governments, NGOs and recipient communities exhibit rapidly growing interest in and experimentation with cash-based alternatives, both in the form of direct cash distribution to food insecure persons, and of local or regional purchase of food using cash provided to operational agencies by donors.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/20t80w3656428335/fulltext.pdf>

Construction of a solar drying unit suitable for conservation of food and enhancement of food security in West Africa, *Antoine Nonclercq & Laurent Spreutels & Cédric Boey & Laurent Lonys & Benoit Dave & Benoit Haut, Food Security, June 2009*

Drying is a widely used technique in sub-Saharan Africa which allows food conservation, weight reduction and added value for some products. However, the technique is quite complex, making the rational concept of drying devices challenging. A rational method for the design and the construction of a fruit and vegetable solar dryer is presented.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/862414748170vnur/fulltext.pdf>

Trade and Development When Exports Lack Diversification: A Case Study from Malawi, *USDA Economic Research Service, July 2009*

Developing countries, particularly those that depend heavily on a small number of agricultural exports, are vulnerable to domestic and international shocks. These countries often have difficulty achieving sustained economic growth. This analysis uses Malawi, a country that earns most of its foreign exchange from tobacco, as a case study of export concentration and heavy exposure to volatility.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR77/ERR77.pdf>

Issues and Prospects in Corn, Soybeans, and Wheat Futures Markets: New Entrants, Price Volatility, and Market Performance Implications, USDA Economic Research Service, July 2009

This report discusses the role and objective of new futures traders compared with those of traditional futures traders and seeks to determine if the composition of traders in futures markets has contributed to convergence problems.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/FDS/2009/08Aug/FDS09G01/FDS09G01.pdf>

UPCOMING EVENTS

International ISHS/ProMusa Symposium Global Perspectives on Asian Challenges

Date: September 14-18, 2009

Location: Guang Dong, China,

ProMusa, in collaboration with the Guang Dong Academy for Agricultural Sciences (GDAAS), the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) and Bioversity's Banana and Plantain Regional Network for Asia and the Pacific (BAPNET), has announced the "International Banana Symposium: Global Perspectives on Asian Challenges."

http://www.promusa.org/symposium_2009/home.html

http://www.farmpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/fischerboel-hill-event_may-06-09-invite-final-3.pdf

Fifth Annual Meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI)

Date: September 22-25, 2009

Location: Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers, New York, NY

The following are among those who have confirmed their attendance at the 2009 CGI Annual Meeting: 35 current and former heads of state, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Larry Summers, Valerie Jarrett, Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs, Angela Braley of WellPoint, John Chambers of Cisco, James Dimon of JP Morgan Chase & Co., Mike Duke of Wal-Mart, Carlos Ghosn of Nissan Motor, Muhtar Kent of The Coca-Cola Company, Jack Ma of Alibaba Group, Indra Nooyi of PepsiCo, Inc., and Carlos Slim Helú of Grupo Carso S.A. de C.V. For the Fifth Annual Meeting, CGI is introducing four new Action Areas – points of collaboration and intervention – that will guide CGI's program. The 2009 Action Areas are: Harnessing Innovation for Development; Strengthening Infrastructure; Developing Human Capital; Financing a Sustainable Future.

Agenda: <http://www.clintonglobalinitiative.org/Document.Doc?id=460>

UN General Assembly Meeting

Date: September 23-30, 2009

Location: New York, NY

President Obama scheduled to address the assembly on September 23.

For a preliminary outline of agenda items, see

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/50.

For the Assembly's "Resolution on Agriculture and Food Security," developed March 17, 2009, see <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/484/89/PDF/N0848489.pdf?OpenElement>

G-20 Summit

Date: September 24-25, 2009

Location: Pittsburgh, PA

<http://www.pittsburghsummit.gov/>

Annual Meeting of the World Bank and IMF

Date: October 6-7, 2009

Location: Istanbul, Turkey

<http://www.imf.org/external/am/2009/schedule.htm>

2009 World Food Prize and "Borlaug Dialogue" symposium: Food, Agriculture, and National Security

Date: October 14-16, 2009

Location: Des Moines, IA

The formal awarding of the \$250,000 World Food Prize will be the cornerstone of a week-long series of events that will attract several hundred government officials and policymakers, private-sector and agribusiness executives, academics and scientists, and NGO and development-agency leaders from over 65 countries. The "conversations" of the annual Norman E. Borlaug International Symposium will this year focus on the connection between food and agriculture and national and international security and cooperation, with speakers including renowned global CEOs, agricultural ministers and diplomats, noted intelligence and security experts, and other eminent leaders in agricultural and rural development.

<https://www.worldfoodprize.org/symposium/2009.htm> (registration available)

FAO Summit on Food Security

Date: November 16-18, 2009

Location: Rome, Italy

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/29219/icode/>

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

India the capital of world hunger, reports new study, *Irish Times, August 7*

India is emerging as the global centre of hunger and malnutrition, failing to eradicate hunger for large sections of its population of more than 1.2 billion, even as its leaders flaunt the country's impressive economic growth. Navdanya Trust, a leading Indian environmentalist campaign group, has reported that

more than 200 million people – or one-in-four Indians – remain hungry. Environmentalist Vandana Shiva, who heads the trust, said there were more hungry people in India than in sub-Saharan Africa, with some 57 million children underweight because of malnutrition.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0805/1224252011141.html>

Volatile climate, politics leave access to food precarious in Madagascar, *UN News, August 6*

Access to food for the people of Madagascar remains unreliable because of the impact of natural disasters, which routinely strike the island State, and continuing political tensions, a United Nations report warned today. The production of maize in the province of Taliara in the south, which contributes 30 per cent of the national total, is expected to halve next year, and its sweet potato harvest, around 20 per cent of the national total, will slump by around 20 per cent, according to the report. In addition, cassava production in the area will fall by 15 per cent.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=31702&Cr=madagascar&Cr1>

India's 'drought-resistant rice', *BBC.com, August 5*

A new variety of rice being tested in the fields of India's eastern Jharkhand state has the potential to change the face of Indian agriculture. Sahbhagi dhan is drought-tolerant and can survive even if there are no rains for 12 days. Rice is known to be a "thirsty crop" and a "water guzzler" and scientists have been working for years to develop a strain which will withstand a dry spell.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8182840.stm

Programs for small farmers to get €6.4-M assistance, *Business World (Philippines), August 5*

The World Food Program (WFP) in the Philippines is set to receive €6.4 million from the European Union Food Facility in order to boost the productivity of small-scale farmers, a WFP statement yesterday said. The assistance will sponsor collective farming and crop diversification programs, as well as improve irrigation and flood resistance of rural communities.

<http://www.bworldonline.com/BW080509/content.php?id=056>

Africa investment sparks land grab fear, *BBC.com, August 5*

Long of little interest to outsiders, African land has rarely been associated with financial reward. But for investors like Susan Payne, chief executive of Emergent Asset Management, farmland in sub-Saharan Africa is a hot bet. Her fund is in the process of buying or leasing a total 50,000 hectares, equal to roughly 80,000 football pitches, in several African countries including Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Angola, Swaziland and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8150241.stm>

G20 countries practice 'agricolonialism' in developing countries, *Workers World, August 5*

Collectively the countries which participate in the Group of Twenty comprise 85 percent of the global gross national product, 80 percent of world trade and two-thirds of the world's population. What many G-20 countries lack, however, is sufficient arable land to meet the needs of growing urban populations.

In recent years, many G-20 nations have engaged in agricolonialism, taking over arable land in developing countries.

http://www.workers.org/2009/world/g20_0806/

U.S. says African farming has role in green push, *Reuters, August 4*

Africa can boost global efforts to curb emissions through the absorption of greenhouse gases by developing its farming sector, the U.S. secretary of agriculture said on Tuesday. U.S. firms unable to stay within greenhouse-gas thresholds at home might well want to invest in such projects to offset their emissions, Tom Vilsack added during a visit to Kenya. "With proper techniques and proper management, you (Africa), can help the world better balance its greenhouse gas emissions," Vilsack told Reuters in Nairobi, where he is attending an Afro-US trade meeting.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSL4462915>

Trees are 'crucial famine food', *BBC.com, August 4*

Food insecurity is a routine fact of life for many of the world's poorest people, Miranda Spitteler, chief executive of Tree Aid told BBC News.

She said the West needed to recognize the important role trees could play in reducing the need for conventional aid. She also called for support for a local tree-based solution to food shortages.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8182673.stm>

The Rush for Africa's Farmland, *The Trumpet, August 4*

Food is becoming the new oil," wrote [Spiegel Online](#) last Thursday. In the next 20 years, demand for food is predicted to rise by 50 percent. This is turning fertile farmland into big business.

Land in Europe and America is already scarce and expensive. Now investors are rushing for the places where land is cheap and plentiful: Africa, Asia and South America.

<http://www.thetrumpet.com/index.php?q=6386.4832.0.0>

Government "must focus on food," *IRIN News, August 4*

Nepal's government must pay greater attention to food security - recognizing people's human right to food as a top priority - say specialists. "Simply providing food aid is not enough to help the food-scarce population in the remote villages because we still see them suffer from hunger every day," Adheep Pokhrel of the Right to Food Network (RtFN), which comprises 36 NGOs advocating food sovereignty and rights in the Himalayan nation.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85565>

NEPAL: Government "must focus on food", *IRIN, August 4*

Nepal's government must pay greater attention to food security - recognizing people's human right to food as a top priority - say specialists. But despite food insecurity and one of the highest rates of child malnutrition in the world, the country lacks a coherent food security policy, say activists, underlined by a 2007 Human Right to Food in Nepal-International Fact-Finding Mission.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85565>

Get Agricultural Research to Farmers, *AllAfrica.com, August 3*

African universities must embrace agricultural research and development - and ensure such research is translated into policy and meets the needs of its farmers, a meeting has heard. Richard Mkandawire, head of the Comprehensive Agricultural Action Programme (CAADP) at The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), said African tertiary institutions continue to be perceived as ivory towers in many countries. He urged African universities to work together through the African Universities Forum Network to embrace the CAADP action plan, agreed by African heads of state in 2003.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200908040579.html>

Invest in Small Farmers, Says IFAD Chief, *AllAfrica.com, August 3*

Eighty percent of the farmers in Africa are smallholder farmers. The majority of them are women. They produce 80 percent of the food that is consumed by Africans. Obviously, if these are the people that produce the food that we eat we must invest in smallholder agriculture. We must link them to markets both for inputs and for outputs. We must be able to give them assistance for the whole value chain so they can add value to their produce, they can be able to sell their produce in markets and connect with the last mile of road to lead them to markets.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200908040137.html>

Farmers Hail Coupon System of Fertilizer Distribution, *AllAfrica.com, August 3*

A research conducted into the coupon system of distribution of fertilizer to peasant farmers has revealed that the innovative system introduced in 2008 has been responsive in improving small scale farmers' access to fertilizer as a result of reduced cost. It has also led to increased production and yield levels, as well as enhanced farmers' welfare.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200908031200.html>

Food insecurity deepens, children hit hardest, *IRIN News, August 3*

A prolonged drought is aggravating food insecurity and affecting children's education in eastern and northeastern Kenya, say officials. Rising livestock deaths in the predominantly pastoralist regions have aggravated the health and nutrition situation. At least 101,950 animals have died in the past two months while more than 4.1 million cattle and goats are at risk of dying, according to a government assessment.
<http://www.IRINnews.org/report.aspx?Reportid=85554>

UN agency projects to boost productivity of small-scale female farmers, *UN News*, August 3

Poor farmers in Africa, Asia and Latin America are set to receive a productivity boost through new United Nations-led agricultural projects funded by a €34 million donation from the European Union (EU), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) announced today.
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=31665&Cr=wfp&Cr1=>

IFC to boost agricultural lending by 30%, *Financial Times*, August 2

The International Finance Corporation, the World Bank's private sector arm, will boost lending to agribusiness by up to 30 per cent in the next three years, as it promotes the role of the private sector in the fight against hunger.
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/23beb79e-7f72-11de-85dc-00144feabdc0.html>

Japan thinks global to fix food shortage, *Financial Times*, August 2

After focusing on oil, metals and minerals for decades, Japan's huge trading houses are turning to agricultural commodities, with Tokyo enthusiastically supporting the shift amid concerns about local and global food security. The move by the *sogo shosha*, or general trading companies, comes as the Japanese government prepares to launch plans this month to finance investment in food production overseas. Japan is the world's largest net importer of food, buying in more than \$40bn (€28bn, £24bn).
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/02da6b66-7fc4-11de-85dc-00144feabdc0.html>

Togo signs CAADP Compact, *Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)*, July 31

Togo's roundtable meetings on the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) have successfully ended with the endorsement of the Togo CAADP Compact.
<http://www.caadp.net/news/?p=252>

Maintaining global food supply - the critical role of science, *Efficient Farming (Australia)*, July 29

Beyond the global financial crisis the world will be looking to the food and agribusiness sector to feed a larger and wealthier global population. The challenges of obtaining more food from less land and water could be a matter for science, according to Australia's former chief scientist. Speaking at a recent Rabobank Advisory Board meeting in Sydney, Dr Jim Peacock, a former Chief Scientist of Australia and head of CSIRO plant biology, said that science has a critical role in increasing yields and improving food quality in order to ensure future global food security.
<http://www.efarming.com.au/News/efarmingnews/2447/maintaining-global-food-supply-the-critical-role-of-science.html>

Countries Join Initiative to Improve Their Prospects for Agricultural Development, *World Bank*, July 27

Agricultural Adaptations, or "AADAPT," supports rigorous assessments of agricultural development projects known as "impact evaluations." The program's major goals are to gather knowledge about agricultural best practices and to provide the evidence needed for more effective agricultural policies and programs.
<http://go.worldbank.org/85CT2ZASZ0>

Smart Input Subsidies and Sustainable Agricultural Development, *Nick Minot (IFPRI)*, *Derek Byerlee (World Bank)*, *Balu Bumb (IFDC)*, and *Karen Brooks (World Bank)*, July 24

Agricultural input subsidies were commonly used to alleviate poverty in rural areas in the 1960s and 70s. However, these types of subsidies were abolished in the late 1980s as part of structural-adjustment programs implemented by development agencies. As a result, fertilizer use in Africa plummeted significantly. Today, the low use of fertilizer and other inputs has made that agricultural productivity in Africa not kept pace with population growth and has severely affected food security on the continent.

Presentation by Nick Minot: <http://www.ifpri.org/events/seminars/2009/20090724minotppt.pdf>

Presentation by Derek Byerlee: <http://www.ifpri.org/events/seminars/2009/20090724Byerleeppt.pdf>

Presentation by Balu Bumb: <http://www.ifpri.org/events/seminars/2009/20090724bumbppt.pdf>

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

We Need a USAID Administrator!, *Nicholas Kristof (On The Ground Blog), The New York Times, August 4*

The Obama administration's nomination of Dr. Paul Farmer to run USAID, the aid agency, seems to be in trouble. The vetting process is way over the top, and it's absurd to me that Dr. Farmer — who is pretty much a saint, as well as an expert on development issues with mud-between-the-toes experience in Haiti and Rwanda — is running into obstacles in the process. Look, I'm sure if you look hard enough and far back enough, you can find things he said or did that maybe he shouldn't have. But this kind of vetting isn't protecting us, it's robbing us of an AID administrator who is eminently well qualified. It's also emblematic of the administration's difficulty filling all kinds of sub-cabinet positions.

<http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/04/we-need-a-usaid-administrator/>

In Afghanistan, a Time to Debate and Decide, *Karl W. Eikenberry (U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan), The Washington Post, August 3*

In March, President Obama announced a new U.S. strategy that includes a major commitment of American men and women -- civilian and military -- to Afghanistan, as well as important new financial contributions to help accelerate development. We will continue to work with the next Afghan administration to field capable and sufficient Afghan National Army and police units; to support effective government personnel systems; to help combat corruption; to provide financial assistance to key Afghan institutions; to promote agricultural development; to address detention issues; to support Afghan-led reconciliation efforts; and to fix contracting practices.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/02/AR2009080201251.html>

IFC to boost agricultural lending by 30%, *The Financial Times, August 2*

The International Finance Corporation, the World Bank's private sector arm, will boost lending to agribusiness by up to 30 per cent in the next three years, as it promotes the role of the private sector in the fight against hunger. The move comes as the IFC reports today that it lent agribusiness a record \$2bn in its 2009 fiscal year, which ended in June 30, up from \$400m five years ago. It said the huge increase in lending was a response to "the global food price hike."

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/23beb79e-7f72-11de-85dc-00144feabdc0.html>

'Dire shortage' at UN food agency, *BBC News, July 31*

The UN food agency says it is facing critical funding shortages that have forced it to cut aid deliveries to millions of people facing starvation. The World Food Programme (WFP) said it could have to close parts of its airway, used to fly aid workers to humanitarian trouble-spots. Deliveries have already been suspended to north Uganda, Ivory Coast and Niger.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/8179250.stm

Problems plague rebuilding of war-torn Afghanistan, *The Washington Post*, July 31

U.S. agencies handling reconstruction work in Afghanistan lack direction and communication, problems that risk wasting U.S. tax dollars, says the special inspector general overseeing tens of billions of dollars worth of projects. Inspector General Arnold Fields says that coordination between the Americans and the Afghans is poor, leading to a disjointed effort and slowing progress on critically needed improvements to the country's transportation, agriculture and energy production.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/31/AR2009073100527.html>

ENVIRONMENT (WATER/CLIMATE)

CLIMATE CHANGE: 75 Million Environmental Refugees to Plague Asia-Pacific, *IPS*, August 4

Pacific Islanders, aiming to secure their very survival, are calling for immediate commitments from the developed world to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 45 percent by 2020. Climate change could produce eight million refugees in the Pacific Islands, along with 75 million refugees in the Asia Pacific region in the next 40 years, warns a new report by aid agency, Oxfam Australia.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=47944>

The struggle against drought in northern Uganda, *Reuters*, August 3

The people of Karamoja in north-eastern Uganda have made ritual sacrifices for as long as anyone can remember, slaughtering their precious animals to ask for rain. But even this age-old belief hasn't been able to protect the Karamajong from a drought that has now gone on for 4 years. Environmentalists blame the situation here on climate change. Forest cover is decreasing around the worland populations are growing. High carbon emissions from industries and big cities are contributing to global warming.

<http://blogs.reuters.com/africanews/2009/08/03/the-struggle-against-drought-in-northern-uganda/>

Nobel Halo Fades Fast for Climate Change Panel, *The New York Times*, August 3

The work of the group, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with former Vice President Al Gore. After two decades of delivering climate reports to the world without fanfare, it suddenly had a wide following. But as the panel gears up for its next climate review, many specialists in climate science and policy, both inside and out of the network, are warning that it could quickly lose relevance unless it adjusts its methods and focus.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/04/science/earth/04clima.html>

World Bank: A Carbon Bigfoot, *The New York Times (Letter to the Editor)*, August 3

The World Bank continues to promote development models based on a prolonged reliance on fossil fuels, illustrated by its 59 percent increase in fossil fuel lending over the last three years. Every additional coal investment ensures future greenhouse gas emissions for the multiple-decades-long lifespan of the coal plant. If the rest of the world is talking emissions targets at long last, why is the World Bank playing saboteur?
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/04/opinion/04iht-edlet.html>

UN sounds alarm on threat to Pacific nations' security posed by climate change, *UN News, August 6*
With rising sea levels threatening to inundate Pacific Island nations, United Nations officials have issued a call for urgent action to be taken to ensure that human security and development gains are not reversed.
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=31694>

Uncertainties surround future monsoons, *BBC.com, July 31*
It is almost halfway through the rainy season, and the monsoon in many parts of South Asia continues to remain unreliable. In some places it has been crippling weak, while in others it has been devastatingly intense. There are places reeling from drought, yet at the same time there are areas that have been hit by torrential rains, triggering floods and landslides in a very short span of time. Very little of the arable land is irrigated, and local populations depend on monsoon rainfall for agriculture.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8178463.stm>

GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Recession in the West Cuts Off An Economic Pipeline in Ghana, *The Washington Post, August 5*
When the U.S. housing crash triggered economic chain reactions around the world, one ended in a lush forest near this village, where on a recent day Emmanuel Awatey was tapping his machete on a log that he very much wanted to chop up. But the U.S. housing market and the global economy collapsed. And so has work for Awatey, the carvers and others working what had been a thriving pipeline from Ghanaian rainforest to American retail. The financial crisis has checked demand for African commodities, slowing the continent's economies.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/04/AR2009080403123.html>

Just When Africa's Luck Was Changing, *The New York Times, Aug 1*
Two years ago, when Dubai World said it would invest \$230 million in Rwandan tourism, officials here rejoiced. But just last month, Dubai World ratcheted back its ambitious investment plans, its coffers strained by the global financial crisis. When the credit crisis erupted in September, many experts thought that Africa would be spared the financial turmoil of the American and European financial systems, because African banks had almost none of their assets tied up in the global subprime market. But it has recently become clear that Africa is being hit hard.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/02/business/02africa.html?scp=6&sq=africa&st=cse>

WOMEN

Women an untapped resource, *Business Times (Singapore), August 6*
The current economic crisis is a chance to advance the economic opportunities of women in the region, and in the process, aid recovery and growth, UN undersecretary-general Noeleen Heyzer said yesterday at the 14th Apec Women Leaders Network meeting. Even though women have 'emerged as the flexible labour force par excellence', she said, 'their entry into the workplace has coincided with trends towards outsourcing and subcontracting; relegating women's jobs to the informal sector without any job security or benefits'.
<http://www.businesstimes.com.sg/sub/news/story/0,4574,344883,00.html>

Africa urged to put women at center of investments in food security, *Xinhua (China), August 6*

A group of leading African women scientists on Wednesday urged African leaders and the U.S. policy-makers to put women at the center of efforts to address chronic hunger and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. Expressing concern over the lack of women in decision-making roles in agricultural development issues in Africa, the women scientists said activating women in research roles critical to achieving food security and development goals.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-08/06/content_11832518.htm

Women empowerment key to economic stability, *Pajhwok News (Afghanistan), August 1*

Head of the Turkish Provincial Reconstruction Team in the central province of Maidan Wardak Cuneyt Yavuzcan has said that economic empowerment of the rural women was critical, yet often overlooked area in Afghanistan. Talking to Pajhwok Afghan News, Yavuzcan said economic stability was key to greater capacity for peace. "The best way to develop economic stability is to build through the most important segment of the population, the women," he emphasized. In the country where 85 percent of the population depends on agriculture, rural women are the lynchpin in the struggle for economic self-reliance, he remarked.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=78830>

MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE ISSUES

A complicated journey from farm to table, *Financial Times, August 6*

Mr Singh and some of his fellow growers in the mango belt in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh have begun selling some of their produce to a new buyer: Bharti Del Monte, a joint venture between Del Monte Pacific, the Philippines-based food company, and Bharti Enterprises, the Indian conglomerate. But India's powerful networks of fruit and vegetable traders are none too happy with such forays into farmers' fields.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0abaf1bc-8220-11de-9c5e-00144feabdc0.html>

Relax trade rules, *IRIN News, August 5*

The US should rethink subsidies for American farmers and relax stringent market rules, among other measures, to encourage trade in agricultural commodities from sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), says an advocacy group. "For [President Barack] Obama's Aid for Trade concept to help the poorest people to plug into market opportunities created by AGOA [Africa Growth and Opportunity Act] - the US must remove the hefty subsidies... [and] tariffs on all products exported from African countries," said Brian Kagoro, Pan-African policy director for ActionAid.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85589>

Corn Power, *Editorial, The Washington Post, August 5*

President Obama's nominee as ambassador to Brazil, Thomas A. Shannon Jr., is a longtime diplomat trained to speak honestly without giving unnecessary offense. So when Sen. James Webb (D-Va.) asked Mr. Shannon during his July 8 confirmation hearing about lifting the 54-cents-per-gallon tariff on imported ethanol, most of which comes from Brazil, the State Department veteran responded carefully. "I personally believe that it would be beneficial, sir," Mr. Shannon remarked, "but I recognize that, especially in the U.S. Congress, there are different views at this point in time."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/04/AR2009080402797_pf.html

Algae: From Biotech to Frankenfuels? *Wall Street Journal, August 5*

Algae, say scientists and industrial titans alike, could jumpstart a viable biofuels industry because it reproduces quickly and can be turned into fuel without taking food from the world's plate. But when Exxon Mobil picked biotechnology rock star J. Craig Venter and his Synthetic Genomics as a partner, the message was clear: the Holy Grail of biofuel feedstock needs some genetic tweaking before it can be produced en masse. The whole point of the joint venture is to marry Mr. Venter's genetic engineering mastery to Exxon's old-energy expertise, to create algae that churn out fuel—a biotech refinery.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/environmentalcapital/2009/08/05/algae-from-biotech-to-frankenfuels/>

French farmers refuse to repay €330m, *Financial Times, August 4*

French farmers have rejected a demand to repay hundreds of millions of euros in state subsidies that have been ruled illegal by the European Commission. Between 1992 and 2002, the French state agricultural agency awarded over €330m in grants to help farmers struggling from a crisis of oversupply of French products in the European market. The money was meant to help farmers lower their prices and find temporary storage for surplus harvest. In January, the Commission ruled that the subsidies were unlawful and likely to distort competition in the European market. France was ordered to reclaim the original subsidies plus interest.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b35a4600-8055-11de-bf04-00144feabdc0.html>

*See Also: **French farmers refuse to repay EU subsidies**, *The Financial Times*, Aug 4*

French farmers, long envied by their European counterparts for receiving the largest share of Europe's agricultural subsidies, have been told they will have to hand back hundreds of millions of euros of grant money after Brussels ruled that the subsidies were illegal. The European Commission does not only want farmers to return the original €330m in aid - it is also charging interest of up to €150m (\$216m, £128m).

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f26d7cac-808e-11de-bf04-00144feabdc0.html>

Bio-Fueling a Trade War, *Benedetto Della Vedova, Op-Ed, The Wall Street Journal, August 4*

The environmental NGOs who decry the Asian biofuels actually oppose all forms of biofuel because they fear it may lead to a reduction of rainforests. This argument is seriously flawed, however. For example, Malaysia restricts its palm oil production to 20% of the land which is allocated for agricultural purposes. Sixty percent of Malaysia's territory is reserved for forest (the average in Europe is 25%).

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB40001424052970204313604574328533995657764.html>

Kenya calls for intra-Africa trade, *Xinhua, August 4*

The Kenyan government on Tuesday challenged African countries to open up their own borders for trade to enhance business among themselves. Speaking at the opening of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum which kicked off in Nairobi on Tuesday, Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga said it was crucial for Africa to coordinate more effectively with the United States in achieving its shared goals in an orderly manner. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-08/04/content_11826387.htm

The Food, Energy and Environment 'Trilemma', *The New York Times (Green Inc.)*, July 31

At the 2009 Bio World Congress on Industrial Biotechnology, held in Montreal last week, industry players and scientists found themselves pondering two seemingly contradictory concerns. One focused on how rapid advances in genetic engineering and biotechnology can expand the market for cellulosic ethanol and other "second-generation biofuels," which are touted as low-emission substitutes for corn ethanol (itself a partial substitute for gasoline). <http://greeninc.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/07/31/the-food-energy-and-environment-trilemma/>

*See Also: **Beneficial Biofuels—The Food, Energy, and Environment Trilemma**, David Tilman et al., *Science*, July 2009*

Recent analyses of the energy and greenhouse-gas performance of alternative biofuels have ignited a controversy that may be best resolved by applying two simple principles. In a world seeking solutions to its energy, environmental, and food challenges, society cannot afford to miss out on the global greenhouse-gas emission reductions and the local environmental and societal benefits when biofuels are done right. However, society also cannot accept the undesirable impacts of biofuels done wrong.

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/325/5938/270>

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