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Key Articles

Fearing a Drought of Aid: As Major Economies Totter, Bush Urges Commitment to World's Most Vulnerable, Washington Post, October 22, 2008

President Bush, who has made international aid a cornerstone of his foreign policy, warned against cutting U.S. assistance to impoverished nations in the midst of the financial turmoil sweeping Wall Street and Main Street, arguing that doing so would undermine America's economy, national security and moral authority.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2008/10/22/ST2008102200490.html>

Drought Resistance Is the Goal, but Methods Differ, New York Times, October 23, 2008

To satisfy the world's growing demand for food, scientists are trying to pull off a genetic trick that nature itself has had trouble accomplishing in millions of years of evolution. They want to create varieties of corn, wheat and other crops that can thrive with little water.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/23/business/23drought.html?hp>

AU says food crisis could defeat Millennium Goals, Reuters, October 21, 2008

Many African nations will not meet the United Nations' poverty reduction goals in the face of high food prices and global financial turmoil, the continent's top diplomat warned recently. "It is very sad to note that many African countries will not be able to achieve the MDGs by 2015 unless the food crisis is addressed," Jean Ping, chairman of the African Union Commission, told officials meeting in the Ethiopian capital.

<http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnJOE49K0EU.html>

Power to the People: Why it's the poor—not the experts—who can best solve the food crisis, Foreign Policy Magazine, November/December 2008

Prices for staple crops such as rice and wheat have more than doubled since 2006, putting an enormous strain on the 1.2 billion people living on a dollar a day or less. In 2004, a typical poor farmer in Udaipur, India, was already spending more than half his daily dollar of income on food—and that was before grain prices went through the roof. NGOs and relief agencies are on the front lines of this global crisis, distributing food and other forms of assistance to the hardest-hit victims. But food handouts may be the last thing that poor countries need right now.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4510

Biofuel backers hold breath for US election, Financial Times, October 23, 2008

To most advocates of corn-based ethanol, John McCain is enemy number one on Capitol Hill. The Republican presidential nominee is staunchly opposed to the federal subsidies, tariffs, mandates and

other price supports that have been showered on corn ethanol, without which the industry's backers say it would not exist. If Barack Obama, Mr McCain's Democratic rival, becomes president then ethanol proponents will be far happier.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/62568406-a088-11dd-80a0-000077b07658.html?ncllick_check=1

See also: The *Financial Times* has recently completed an in-depth report on ethanol. Please see the section below for further reading on the topic.

Food crisis in retreat, but 'major emergency' still exists, International Herald Tribune, October 19, 2008

At first sight, it seems like good news for those fighting hunger around the world: the spikes in commodity prices that set off food riots this year have been all but erased amid the recent financial turmoil. But relief officials now have another fear: that distracted donors will forget that the problem goes much deeper, and stop devoting time and money to a food emergency that will only be worsened by a now-looming recession.

<http://www.ihf.com/articles/2008/10/19/business/food.php>

IMF sees Africa growth dipping to 6 pct, Reuters, October 23, 2008

Economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa will dip to 6 percent in 2008 and 2009 due to tough global conditions, while inflation is seen rising to 12 percent this year, the International Monetary Fund said on Thursday.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/marketsNewsUS/idUKLN31020920081023>

See Also (also in "New Reports" Section): ***Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa***, International Monetary Fund, October 2008

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2008/AFR/eng/sreo1008.pdf>

Glory Days Fade for U.S. Farmers: Plunging Crop Prices and Higher Costs Cloud Horizon for '09 Profits and Land Sales, Wall Street Journal (by Scott Kilman), October 22, 2008

The Farm Belt, one of the hottest parts of the U.S. economy in recent years, is rapidly cooling. The Midwest faces plunging crop prices and stubbornly high production costs. Corn prices have dropped from \$7.54 a bushel around July Fourth in central Iowa to just \$3.81 a bushel on Tuesday. But growers are hearing from suppliers that fertilizer and seed costs could rise by more than 40% each for next spring's plantings.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122463109671256373.html>

China Caps Bank Overhaul With \$19 Billion Agricultural Bank Aid, Bloomberg, October 22, 2008

Agricultural Bank of China will get \$19 billion from the government, paving the way for the lender to sell shares to the public and capping a decade-long bailout of the nation's banking industry. China's Agricultural Bank, the least profitable of the four biggest state-owned commercial banks, was founded in 1979 to serve the country's 800 million farmers.

http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601080&sid=apM0K_fsmgsU&refer=asia

Feminisation of agriculture sector in Nepal: Women's role in agriculture sector is in gradual transformation all across the globe, and Nepal is no exception, NepalNews, October 2008

Nepalese agriculture is a feminised sector since a long time. A decade long armed conflict of mid 1990's, and the increasing rate of out migration of men from remote areas led feminisation of agriculture sector in a more rampant trend. In Nepal, sixty eight percent of the population still adopt agriculture as their livelihoods options. Out of the total labour force, women account about seventy percent of it.

http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2008/others/guestcolumn/oct/guest_columns_08.php

New Reports/Policy Briefs

Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa, International Monetary Fund, October 2008

Sub-Saharan Africa's prospects have deteriorated somewhat and the risks have increased, according to the October 2008 Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa. Growth in the region is projected to dip to 6 percent in 2008 and 2009. The fall is due mainly to the global food and fuel price shock, which has weighed particularly on growth in oil-importing countries, and to the global financial market turmoil, which has slowed global growth and demand for Africa's exports. Inflation is expected to rise to 12 percent in 2008, mainly on account of the food and fuel price shock. As a result of rising prices, particularly of food, poverty may well be on the increase in 2008. In 2009, inflation should ease to 10 percent, helped by recent commodity price declines. There are significant risks to the outlook related to a potentially deeper and longer period of global financial turmoil and resulting slowdown in global activity, and substantial uncertainty concerning commodity prices.

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2008/AFR/eng/sreo1008.pdf>

The developing world is poorer than we thought, but no less successful in the fight against poverty,

World Bank Working Paper, September 2008

The paper presents a major overhaul to the World Bank's past estimates of global poverty, incorporating new and better data. Extreme poverty-as judged by what "poverty" means in the world's poorest countries-is found to be more pervasive than we thought. Yet the data also provide robust evidence of continually declining poverty incidence and depth since the early 1980s. Because of lags in survey data availability, these estimates do not yet reflect the sharp rise in food prices since 2005.

<http://www->

wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2008/08/26/000158349_20080826113239/Rendered/PDF/WPS4703.pdf

See Also: World Bank Briefing note on the key findings from: "The developing world is poorer than we thought, but no less successful in the fight against poverty"

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/Poverty-Brief-in-English.pdf>

Annual Review of Development Effectiveness: Sharing Global Challenges, World Bank/Independent Evaluation Group, 2008

The Annual Review of Development Effectiveness (ARDE), and independent evaluation, presents evidence on the Bank's efforts in two important and connected areas: tracking outcomes of Bank projects and country programs; and progress in fostering global public goods, such as protecting the earth's climate and preventing the spread of dangerous communicable diseases.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXT2008ANNREVDEVEFFE/Resources/arde_08.pdf

Executive Summary:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXT2008ANNREVDEVEFFE/Resources/exec_summary.pdf

Micro-Level Analysis of Farmers' Adaptation to Climate Change in Southern Africa, International Food Policy Research Institute, October 2008

This IFPRI research brief is part of a series of briefs entitled, "[How can African Agriculture Adapt to Climate Change? Insights from Ethiopia and South Africa.](#)" The brief falls under the project "Food and Water Security under Global Change: Developing Adaptive Capacity with a Focus on Rural Africa," which forms part of the CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food. The project aims to provide

policymakers and stakeholders in Ethiopia and South Africa with tools to better understand and analyze the consequences of global change—in particular climate change—and to form policy decisions that facilitate adaptation in these countries and beyond.

http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/ib/rb15/rb15_07.pdf

Current World Fertilizer Trends and Outlook to 2012, FAO, 2008

This report presents world nitrogen, phosphate and potassium fertilizer medium-term supply and demand projections for the period 2008–2012.

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/worldfood/Reports_and_docs/cwfsoc.doc

World Bank Institute – Development Outreach Special Report, “Making Agriculture A Development Priority” – October 2008

Making Agriculture a Development Priority, by Alain de Janvry and Derek Byerlee

The fundamental role of agriculture for development in the 21st century deserves greater attention from governments and international development agencies.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=503>

Rising Food Prices: Are there right policy choices?, by Hassan Zaman, Christopher Delgado, Donald Mitchell, and Ana Revenga

A review of the best policy interventions to respond to food price increases in local markets.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=504>

A Window of Opportunity for Poor Farmers: Investing for long-term food supply, by Derek Byerlee, Alain de Janvry, Robert Townsend, and Paula Savanti

Farmers may help solve the food, feed, and fuel crises, and prosper as a result, with the aid of political support and investments in agriculture.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=505>

Biofuels: Big potential for some...but big risks too, by Masami Kojima and Irina Klytchnikova

Biofuels trade liberalization would increase competition in the sector. But for this to deliver net gains in welfare for developing countries a level playing-field is needed.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=506>

Agriculture’s Special Powers in Reducing Poverty, by Paula Savanti and Elisabeth Sadoulet

Agriculture can reduce poverty directly, but the contribution of agriculture to poverty reduction differs according to country types.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=507>

Women Make Income Gains by Shifting from Subsistence to Cash Crops, by Lynn Brown

Enabling women to move beyond subsistence and into market-oriented production is important for successful agricultural development. An Example from Mozambique.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=508>

Managing the Exodus: Helping some farmers get out of agriculture, by Karen Macours and Elisabeth Sadoulet

As the labor force in agriculture grows smaller, displaced rural workers need new options. Effective preparedness of those who leave the farm is a critical part of an overall strategy to mobilize agriculture for development.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=509>

Pilot Innovations Could Reignite Anemic Rural Finance, by Renate Kloepfing-Todd and Jonathan Agwe

Rural finance and credit services to smallholder farmers are high-risk activities. But there is hope for a boost because rural finance has a pivotal role to play amid rising food prices and the need to increase agricultural production.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=510>

Linking Small Farmers to the Market, by Dina Umali-Deininger

The private sector can help smallholders to participate in modern supply chains. This type of collaboration will be critical to agricultural development.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=511>

Prospective Benefits from Cotton Subsidy Cuts and New Technologies, by Kym Anderson and Ernesto Valenzuela

While waiting for the removal of cotton subsidies, farmers can benefit from the adoption of GM cotton varieties currently available to them, as the experiences of China and India indicate.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=512>

Capturing the Benefits of Genetically Modified Organisms for the Poor, by Catherine Ragasa and Eija Pehu

The controversy swirling around GMOs in rich countries should not obscure their potential to reduce poverty among poor farmers.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=513>

Conservation Tillage Promises More Profitable and Sustainable Farms...and lower greenhouse gas emissions, by Irina Klytchnikova

Zero-tillage is becoming an increasingly important conservation technology. The challenge for researchers is to develop technologies and equipment adaptable to local climatic conditions.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=514>

Financial Times – In-Depth Coverage on Ethanol

<http://www.ft.com/indepth/ethanol>

Biofuels: From hope to husk, Financial Times, October 21, 2008

It was an American dream that has failed to become a reality. For much of the last decade, enthusiasts from President George W. Bush down have touted corn-based ethanol as something approaching a superfuel, a home-grown alternative to foreign oil that would help cut smog and bring hope to struggling farmers. It has not worked out that way.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/bec31b9c-9f9c-11dd-a3fa-000077b07658.html>

Political pressure keeps ethanol cash flowing, Financial Times, October 22, 2008

By most rational measures, the corn-based ethanol industry should be on its knees. Its six biggest public companies have lost more than \$8.7bn (€6.7bn, £5.3bn) in market value in the past three years alone. The fuel has had little impact on either greenhouse gases or US dependence on foreign oil, in spite of an estimated \$80bn in taxpayer subsidies that were supposed to address both issues.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2014e7f6-a081-11dd-80a0-000077b07658.html>

Investors suffer as US ethanol boom dries up, Financial Times, October 22, 2008

Investors, such as Microsoft's Bill Gates, are sitting on billions of dollars in losses after buying into the corn-based ethanol industry that George W. Bush embraced as the answer to US energy woes. Six of the biggest publicly traded US ethanol producers have lost more than \$8.7bn (£5bn) in market value since the peak of the boom in mid-2006 and the beginning of this month, according to an analysis by the Financial Times.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/a9c5698e-9fd3-11dd-a3fa-000077b07658.html>