

Contents:

- Key Articles
 - New Reports/Policy Briefs
 - Political/Conceptual Shifts
 - Agribusiness
 - Food Aid
 - The Food Crisis and Impacts on Poverty
 - Agriculture Development Practices (corporate, IGO, NGO, gov't) with Focus on South Asia/Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Biofuels
 - Market Access
 - Developments in Agriculture, Science, and Technology
 - Women In Development
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Key Articles

- ***Investing in Africa: Land and agriculture***, Reuters, October 7, 2008
Soaring food prices, supply fears among import-dependent countries and rising demand for biofuels have driven up investment in agricultural land, notably in Africa. The meltdown in financial markets has slowed some of these flows, but some analysts say there are still good opportunities in African land, where investment in infrastructure, fertiliser and equipment has traditionally been lacking.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/marketsNews/idUSL613947020081008>
- ***Seeking Africa's green revolution***, BBC News, October 8, 2008
From the begging bowl to the bread basket: in just two years, Malawi has gone from famine to food surplus - a minor agricultural miracle. By applying a mixture of crop breeding, soil management, irrigation and diversification, agro-science experts are helping subsistence farmers to cope with climate change and buck the trend in neighboring African countries.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7651977.stm>
- ***Food Policy Experts Urge Investment in African Agricultural Development***, VOA News, October 3, 2008
At the annual National Food Policy Conference in Washington, a panel of experts discussing the roots of Africa's chronic food insecurity urged major new investments in agricultural development.
<http://www.voanews.com/english/Science/2008-10-03-voa54.cfm>
- ***Africa's prospects: Opportunity knocks***, Economist, October 9, 2008
With world markets in turmoil, an unexpected and overlooked continent may benefit from its very isolation
Despite the litany of problems, the 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa are, by several measures, enjoying a period of unparalleled economic success. And despite the turmoil in the world's financial markets, international investors still think they can make money there.

http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12376610

- ***Don't cut aid to Africa, AU head pleads to world***, Washington Post, October 9, 2008
The chairman of the African Union (AU) urged the world on Thursday not to row back on aid to the world's poorest continent due to the financial crisis. "Our appeal to our development partners is that they should not cut aid to the developing countries," Jakaya Kikwete, who is also president of Tanzania, told reporters.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/09/AR2008100901289.html>
- ***U.N. Says Biofuel Subsidies Raise Food Bill and Hunger***, By Elisabeth Rosenthal, New York Times, October 7, 2008
A United Nations food agency called on Tuesday for a review of biofuel subsidies and policies, noting that they had contributed significantly to rising food prices and the hunger in poor countries.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/08/world/europe/08italy.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>
 - FAO Report (also in "New Reports/Policy Briefs":
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0100e/i0100e.pdf>
- ***An Open Letter to the next Farmer in Chief***, by Michael Pollan, New York Times Magazine, October 9, 2008
What the next president can and should do to remake the way we grow and eat our food.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/magazine/12policy-t.html?ref=magazine>
 - This week's New York Times magazine is devoted to looking at problems (domestic and international) related to food, and offers some possible solutions:
<http://www.nytimes.com/indexes/2008/10/10/magazine/index.html>



- ***Command for Africa Is Established by Pentagon***, New York Times, October 5, 2008
Last week, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, inaugurated the newest regional Command headquarters, Africa Command. The new regional headquarters reflects a Pentagon push to coordinate security, aid and development in Africa.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/05/world/africa/05command.html?emc=rss&partner=rssnyt>

New Reports/Policy Briefs

- **THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE 2008 – BIOFUELS: Prospects, Risks And Opportunities**, FAO, 2008 <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0100e/i0100e.pdf>
- **Gender in agriculture sourcebook**, World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. September 2008 (report has 2009 copyright). The Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook provides an up-to-date understanding of gender issues and a rich compilation of compelling evidence of good practices and lessons learned to guide practitioners in integrating gender dimensions into agricultural projects and programs. <http://www.ifad.org/gender/pub/sourcebook/gal.pdf>
- **Food Sustainability -- A Guide to Private Sector Action**, UN Global Compact Office (UN Private Sector Forum), September 2008
The new publication features more than 30 examples of best and emerging practices in seven topical areas that relate to food sustainability: water management; agricultural inputs and infrastructure; financial mechanisms and risk management instruments; nutrition; energy and biofuels; the role of information and communication technology; and job opportunities for rural low-income populations. The guide also provides suggested actions for businesses to undertake to contribute in these areas. http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/news_events/9.1_news_archives/2008_09_24/food_sustainability.pdf
- **How will climate change shift agro-ecological zones and impact African agriculture?**, World Bank, September 2008
http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/09/11/000158349_20080911163038/Rendered/PDF/WPS4717.pdf
- **National Biofuels Action Plan 'Fact Sheet'**, USDA, October 7, 2008
In an effort to meet President Bush's "Twenty in Ten" goal and meet the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) targets in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA) the Biomass Research and Development Board (the Board)-co-chaired by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)-developed the National Biofuels Action Plan (NBAP) to accelerate the development of a sustainable biofuels industry. <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/10/0258.xml>
- **Seeing People Through The Trees: Scaling-Up Efforts to Advance Rights and Address Poverty, Conflict and Climate Change**, Rights and Resources, 2008
Booming global market demands and political reactions to security concerns are increasing pressure on forest areas and forest peoples—who are already disproportionately poor and disenfranchised. http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_737.pdf
- **Micro Doses, Mega Benefits: Promoting Fertilizer Use in Semi-Arid Zimbabwe**, International Crops Research Institute For The Semi-Arid Tropics, 2008

The precise application of small quantities of inorganic nitrogen-based fertilizers, termed microdosing, is one strategy that can familiarize farmers in semi-arid areas with the benefits of applying fertilizer. The low rates of fertilizer used for microdosing are seen as a starting point. http://www.icrisat.org/Publications/EBooksOnlinePublications/Publications-2008/Micro_Doses_Mega_%20Scr.pdf

Political/Conceptual Shifts

- **World Bank leader urges modernization of G-7**, Washington Post, October 6, 2008
The Group of Seven industrialized countries is outmoded and should be replaced with a new entity that would include growing economies in Asia and Latin America, said World Bank President Robert Zoellick.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/06/AR2008100601275.html>
- **The European Commission and IFAD sign EUR 67.5m deal to finance pro-poor agricultural research**, IFAD, October 6, 2008
The European Commission (EC) and IFAD have signed a new EUR 67.5 million Contribution Agreement to finance research through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). 50 percent of the funds will be dedicated to Africa through CGIAR system.
<http://www.ifad.org/media/press/2008/48.htm>
- **Boosting growth**, Mail & Guardian (U.K.), October 6th, 2008
The *Mail & Guardian*, in collaboration with the UN Millennium Campaign, is running a series of exclusive interviews with African presidents about the progress their countries have made towards achieving the MDGs.
This week they spoke to Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete.
<http://www.mg.co.za/article/2008-10-06-boosting-growth>
- **U.S. Financial Crisis to Delay Continent's Project Progress**, The Daily Nation (Kenya), October 7, 2008
Development projects funded by private capital inflows in the continent risk being postponed due to the financial crisis that is being experienced in the United States. According to World Bank chief economist for Africa Shanta Deverajan, projects financed by these inflows stand delayed in the coming days.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200810070813.html>
- **Will Investments in Agricultural Technology be enough?**, by Forhad Shilpi and Uwe Deichmann, Ending Poverty in South Asia (World Bank), September 29, 2008
Will investments in agricultural technology [in south Asia] by themselves be sufficient to ensure long-term productivity growth in the farm sector and, more importantly, for rural poverty reduction? As rapidly rising food prices threaten food security and the poverty gains made by developing countries, many have blamed declining funding for agricultural technology development for this state of affairs (for example, the [New York Times](#)).
<http://endpovertyinsouthasia.worldbank.org/global-food-crisis-will-investments-agricultural-technology-be-enough>

- **Raise food production and prices will drop, forum told**, The Daily Nation (Kenya) , By David Mugonyi, October 7
Countries should increase food production to tame the rising prices, Commonwealth secretary general Kamlesh Sharma said. Mr Sharma was speaking during the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Finance ministers meeting on Tuesday. Mr Sharma said funds for the Millennium Development Goals should not be used to cushion the public because this could be a setback to general development.
<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/478220/-/tkxwlc/-/index.html>

Agribusiness

- **Late funds threaten coffee yield**, By Muchemi Wachira , the Daily Nation, October 7, 2008
Anticipation by local coffee farmers of realising a bumper harvest this season may not materialise if credit to facilitate the harvesting of their crop is not availed in time.
<http://www.nation.co.ke/business/news/-/1006/478152/-/jibx6yz/-/index.html>
- **New Beans Drive Coffee Exports to \$362 Million**, By Halima Abdallah K, The East African (Kenya), October 5, 2008
A replanting programme has reversed years of declining production in Uganda's coffee sub-sector, pushing year-on-year exports of the commodity 50 per cent over 2007 and earnings to \$362 million.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200810060875.html>

Food Aid

- **UN Appeals to Taliban to Allow Afghan Food Aid**, By Steve Herman, Voa
The United Nations chief in Afghanistan is making an appeal to the Taliban not to disrupt food aid heading to hungry Afghans.
<http://www.voanews.com/english/2008-10-06-voa15.cfm>

The Food Crisis and Impacts on Poverty

- **Developing Nations at Ghana Summit Worry About Prices, Trade**, By Scott Bobb, Voa News, October 3, 2008
Heads of state from 79 nations in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific are ending a summit in Ghana calling on the international community to stabilize financial markets and prices for oil and food. The leaders also asked for greater flexibility in negotiating trade agreements with the European Union.
<http://www.voanews.com/english/2008-10-03-voa56.cfm>
- **'Subsidies Will Solve Africa's Food Crisis'**, By Catherine Riungu, The East African (Kenya), October 5, 2008
As the food situation in Africa becomes critical, the continent's governments have been asked to

immediately start giving farming subsidies to overcome a crisis that could condemn millions of people to starvation.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200810060867.html>

- ***New Food Crisis***, By Geoffrey Kamadi, The East African (Kenya), September 28, 2008
Families that were receiving child care assistance, in the form of food, are now dependent on the NGO aid due to worsening financial circumstance. The families get uncooked food, but in some cases no longer have enough money to pay for the means to cook it.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200809300182.html>
- ***The Real Crisis in North Korea? Food***, TIME Magazine, October 06, 2008
As the world frets over an apparent collapse of an agreement to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program, another crisis may be unfolding in Asia's secretive Stalinist state: a worsening food shortage. North Koreans are, unfortunately, no strangers to hunger. In the 1990s, a severe famine is thought to have left up to a million North Koreans dead. Though aid workers say the country is not facing a full-blown famine, the shortage appears to be the worst food crisis since the 1990s.
<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1847428,00.html>

Agriculture Development practices (corporate, IGO, NGO, gov't) with focus on South Asia/Sub-Saharan Africa

- ***Developing nations face tough times: World Bank chief***, Reuters, October 9, 2008
With world attention trained on resolving a financial crisis in Western economies, World Bank President Robert Zoellick said the poverty-fighting institution is warning developing countries to prepare for tougher times.
In an interview with Reuters ahead of weekend meetings of world finance ministers, Zoellick said business failures, bank emergencies and balance of payments crises are all possible in developing countries as the crisis spreads.
<http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnJOE498003.html>
- ***Stakes high for South African land reform***, Washington Post, October 8, 2008
For those seeking to redistribute South Africa's rich farmland among landless, poor blacks, there is an uncomfortably close reminder of the dangers of getting this sensitive task wrong: Zimbabwe. More than a decade after the end of apartheid, poor blacks in South Africa are still waiting for farms promised to them by the ruling African National Congress (ANC), which sees land redistribution as a cornerstone of black majority rule.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/08/AR2008100803474.html>
- ***Easing organic agricultural trade / New tools help developing-country farmers market organic produce***, FAO, October 8, 2008
Organic farmers in developing countries will have greater access to world markets, thanks to two practical tools launched this week that seek to ease trade in organic agricultural products.
<http://www.fao.org/Newsroom/en/news/2008/1000933/index.html>
- ***Bunyoro Oil Could Cause Food Shortage, Says Hoima Boss***, The Monitor (Uganda), October 5, 2008

Food shortage is looming in Hoima District because the population has abandoned agriculture in preference to speculating about oil fortunes.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200810060911.html>

- ***Feed Our Children, Leaders Urge WFP***, New Vision (Uganda), October 4, 2008
Leaders in north and northeastern Uganda have appealed to the World Food Programme (WFP) not to withdraw the school feeding programme.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200810060369.html>
- ***IFAD to support Senegal with agricultural value chains support project with US\$14.89 million loan and US\$0.27 million grant***, IFAD, October 8, 2008
A US\$14.89 million loan and a US\$0.27 million grant from IFAD to the Republic of Senegal for the Agricultural Value Chains support project will help tackle rising rural poverty in the country's "groundnut basin".
<http://www.ifad.org/media/press/2008/49.htm>
- ***Madagascar: Needy Farmers in Country Earn Boost From UN Rural Development Agency***, UN News Service (New York), October 3, 2008
Poor rural families across southern and central Madagascar will be able to increase their incomes after the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) announced a \$19 million scheme to improve farming production.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200810060063.html>

Biofuels

- ***USDA And DOE Release National Biofuels Action Plan***, USDA, October 7, 2008
Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Ed Schafer and Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Samuel W. Bodman today released the National Biofuels Action Plan (NBAP), an interagency plan detailing the collaborative efforts of Federal agencies to accelerate the development of a sustainable biofuels industry.
<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/10/0257.xml>
- ***Kenyan Varsity set to commercialize biodiesel project***, Africa Science News Source, October 2, 2008
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) together with a Nanyuki-based Self Help Centre, will soon make farmers breath a sigh of relief while buying cheap, economical and good quality fuel. The two universities are spinning off their biodiesel projects into commercial ventures.
http://africasciencenews.org/asns/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=717&Itemid=2

Market Access

- ***The Organisation of African Trade Unions Unity (OATUU) Opposes EPA***, Ghanaian Chronicle, October 8, 2008

The controversy surrounding the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), between the European Union (EU) and the African-Caribbean Pacific (ACP) countries, keeps on heightening as each day passes by.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200810080948.html>

Developments in Agriculture, Science and Technology

- ***For farmers, new fertiliser application technique offers a bountiful promise***, By Jevans Nyabiage, The Daily Nation (Kenya), October 8, 2008

A new fertilizer application technique is expected to change the continent's farming scenario. According to the Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), fertilizer applied in small doses at the right place, at the right time is triggering the much-awaited green revolution in sub-Saharan Africa.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/magazines/money/-/435440/478410/-/ox3bnb/-/index.html>

- **Note:** See "Micro Doses, Mega Benefits Promoting Fertilizer Use in Semi-Arid Zimbabwe" in 'New Reports/Policy Briefs' section of this news brief.
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Women in Development

- ***Eight Ugandan Scientists Scoop Awards***, Africa Science News Source, October 7, 2008

Eight Ugandan women researchers have been awarded prestigious agricultural awards by the new African Women in Agricultural Research and Development Programme (AWARD).

http://africasciencenews.org/asns/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=725&Itemid=1