

# Global Food for Thought



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September 8-14, 2017

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## KEY ARTICLES

**[Trade with South Korea Makes America a Stronger Nation](#)**, *Opinion, Dan Glickman, The Hill, September 10*

Trump's recent proposal to pull America out of the US-South Korea Free Trade Agreement will hurt our allies, our economy, and in particular, our farmers. This is not only a national security issue of the highest magnitude, but a serious attack on our trade relationship with a key ally that will impact numerous industries and jobs in America. Agriculture provides thousands of jobs, billions of dollars to our economy, and food for the world.

**SEE ALSO:** **[Four Ways to Rebuild Consensus on Agricultural Trade](#)**, *Opinion, Max Baucus and Richard Lugar, Bloomberg, September 11*

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**Bill and Melinda Gates: Let's Keep Investing in the World's Poor**, *Opinion, Bill and Melinda Gates, Wall Street Journal, September 13*

US foreign aid has helped developing countries make huge progress against disease and poverty—and this is no time to reverse course. The two of us have spent nearly every day of the past 17 years working on the fight against disease and poverty, but today, we are concerned. After a generation of historic progress, the world's commitment to helping its poorest people is more uncertain than at any time since we started our foundation.

**Guest Commentary - Strengthening Our World at the Roots: Ag-Tech and Opportunity in a Time of Change**, *Andrew Mack, Global Food for Thought, September 13*

Our world is at a crossroads. Three issues—employment, migration, and health—are set to shape the next ten years of the global economy. These are not future themes or issues where inaction is even possible, but current crises affecting people around the world, especially in the global south. For each of these three meta-issues, agriculture is at the center. And for US agriculture and ag-tech companies, there should be big benefits.

**Health at a Planetary Scale**, *Politico, September 13*

Two hundred years ago, there were about 1 billion of us; today, we number more than 7 billion. We appropriate about half the planet's accessible fresh water and nearly half the desert-free land surface to feed ourselves. The results are evident at a planetary scale, leading earth scientists to coin a new geological epoch: the Anthropocene, where human health and the earth's natural systems are inexorably linked.

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## GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

**African Farmers Brace for Life without Sweet Support from EU**, *Wall Street Journal, September 11*

For decades, caps on annual sugar production within the European Union helped keep prices artificially high and created a market for imports, especially from poor countries that are freed from tariffs. But with EU production limits set to end, governments and sugar associations expect farmers from France to Poland to boost production and cut their costs. That would largely crowd out producers such as those in Africa, which currently provide half of Europe's sugar.

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**SEE ALSO: [Pakistan Struggles to Export Sugar Surplus as Global Prices Plunge](#), Reuters, September 12**

**[In a World of Crises, Yemen Still Stands Out](#), Washington Post, September 8**

The conflict in Yemen, the Arab world's most impoverished nation, is a calamity by any measure. The lack of a political solution has exacted a hideous cost: More than 10,000 people have been killed, more than 2 million people remain displaced in temporary camps or shelters, and close to 20 million Yemenis—that is, more than two-thirds of the country's population—face food insecurity and around 7 million people are on the brink of famine.

**[Creation of Agribusinesses and 'Agripreneurs' Key Topics at AGRF](#),**

*Devex, September 8*

Experts and advocates pushed for the promotion of agriculture careers in Africa and more government-initiated investments at the seventh African Green Revolution Forum, urging governments and private investors to advance engagements beyond discussions through to implementation. Developing agribusinesses could also promote food security and reduce unemployment rates, while revolutionizing the sector by transforming raw goods into finished products and reducing post-harvest waste.

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## US GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

**[Mark Green on Why He Is an 'Optimist' about USAID](#), Devex, September 14**

Mark Green, believes that under the right circumstances, the end of a foreign assistance program can be cause for a massive celebration. Since unanimously confirmed by the US Senate to lead USAID, he has made clear that he sees the role of US foreign assistance as working itself out of a job.

**[Four Myths about Fiscal Transparency](#), DipNote Blog, US Department of State, September 12**

The US Department of State has released its 2017 Fiscal Transparency Report, which reviews 141 governments worldwide and assesses whether those governments have made complete and reliable budget information widely and easily accessible to their citizens. While budget documents may not seem like a sensational topic, they are a critical part of a functioning democracy, and strengthen the effectiveness of US overseas development programs.

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**SEE REPORT: 2017 Fiscal Transparency Report**, *US Department of State*,  
*September 14*

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## BIG IDEAS AND EMERGING INNOVATIONS

**With Designer Bacteria, Crops Could One Day Fertilize Themselves**, *Wired*,  
*September 14*

Thanks to the microbes that live in their roots, peanuts, peas, and many types of beans can essentially make their own fertilizer. But most of the world's biggest food crops—corn, wheat, rice—lack these fertilizer-producing microbes. A new startup is now trying to genetically modify these fertilizer-producing microbes to be able to live in the roots of any plant. With a \$100 million initial runway and some of the fastest DNA-building robots out there, the company hopes to be planting seeds in the next five years.

**Seeding the Future? “Ark” Preserves Rare, Threatened Plants**, *AP*,  
*September 10*

Inside the freezer in Framingham are tightly sealed packages containing an estimated 6 million seeds from hundreds of plant species. They are rare varieties of plant life native to the region—in some cases found nowhere else in the world—and are in grave danger of vanishing from the landscape. Dubbed the “Seed Ark” by the New England Wild Flower Society, its purpose is to preserve a rich diversity of plant life.

**Justin Kamine: Society Needs to Move Toward the Notion of a Circular Economy**, *Food Tank*, *September 8*

Justin Kamine, managing member of Kamine Development Corporation, and Co-Founder and Partner of KDC Ag aims to transform the agriculture world via creating a more sustainable food supply chain, eliminating food and plastic waste, and developing solar projects. KDC Ag is working to find innovative solutions to eliminate food waste and increase sustainable farming, while KDC Solar has built up more than 75 megawatts of solar operational.

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## FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

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### **Facing Potential Wheat Crisis, Egypt Plays down Poppy Seed Risk,**

*Reuters, September 13*

Egypt, the world's biggest wheat buyer, has panicked global suppliers in recent weeks by halting the import of two cargoes of wheat from France and Romania due to contamination with poppy seeds. Poppy seeds can be used to produce drugs such as opium. However, the variety of poppy seed in the seized wheat shipments is a different, harmless variety not used in drug production, say the cargoes' shipping companies. Traders are watching closely, and have said that any rejection of imports could lead them to boycott Egypt.

### **Brexit Leaves French Fishermen on the Hook,** *NPR, September 11*

French fishermen have been nervous since Britain voted to leave the European Union last year. That's because when the divorce is final, the United Kingdom will also leave what's called the Common Fisheries Policy. The British could find it tougher to sell their fish to the European Union, where the United Kingdom gives up full access to the single market and full access of the customs union. The French fishing industry worry that, after Brexit, they will be left fighting to catch fewer fish, crowded into a narrower band of sea.

### **Sea Salt around the World Is Contaminated by Plastic,** *Guardian,*

*September 8*

Sea salt around the world has been contaminated by plastic pollution. Microplastics are becoming ubiquitous in the environment and finding their way into the food chain via the salt in our diets. Tiny particles have been found in sea salt in the UK, France, and Spain, as well as in China, and most recently, in the US. The majority of the contamination comes from microfibers and single-use plastics such as water bottles.

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## **NUTRITION AND HEALTH**

### **'Hidden' Hunger Crisis in Congo Pushing It Closer to Famine,** *Reuters,*

*August 14*

Hunger in the Democratic Republic of Congo has soared in the last year, leaving 7.7 million people in urgent need of food aid and pushing the country closer to famine than it has been in a decade, food security experts said. Much of the rise in hunger stems from escalating violence in the Kasai and Tanganyika regions, which in Kasai alone has forced 1.4 million people to flee their homes in the past year.

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**SEE ALSO: [Food Insecurity Soars in Conflict-Ridden Democratic Republic of Congo](#), *FAO*, August 14**

**[The Great Nutrient Collapse](#), *Politico*, September 13**

Measurements of fruits and vegetables show that their minerals, vitamin and protein content has measurably dropped over the past 50 to 70 years. Researchers have generally assumed the reason is fairly straightforward: We've been breeding crops for higher yields, rather than nutrition. But new research suggests that increasing CO2 in the atmosphere is making plants grow more rapidly, leading to lower levels of micronutrients, and higher levels of sugars.

**SEE ALSO: [Veggies and Grains Are Becoming More Like Junk Food, Thanks to Rising CO2](#), *Grist*, September 13**

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## ENVIRONMENT, WATER, AND CLIMATE

**[Coffee, Bees and Climate Change Are Linked In Ways You May Not Have Expected](#), *NPR*, September 11**

Climate change is threatening both pollinators and the areas where coffee can grow. A new study is the first to model the impact of climate change on both coffee and pollinators. The researchers projected that by 2050, climate change could reduce the amount of ground usable to grow coffee in Latin America by up to 88 percent. The study projects that about 34-51 percent of areas will become less suitable to growing coffee but will see more bee diversity, somewhat offsetting farmers' losses.

**SEE ALSO: [Coffee Lovers and Farmers Will Be Hurt by Warming Planet](#), *Reuters*, September 11**

**SEE REPORT: [Coupling of Pollination Services and Coffee Suitability under Climate Change](#), *PNAS*, September 11**

**[New Study Shows Organic Farming Traps Carbon in Soil to Combat Climate Change](#), *Civil Eats*, September 11**

One of the best ways to keep excess carbon out of the atmosphere is thought to be locking more of that carbon into the soil that grows our food. A new study from Northeastern University and nonprofit research organization The Organic Center has concluded that soils from organic farms had 26 percent more potential for long-term carbon storage than soils from conventional farms, along with 13 percent more soil organic matter.

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**SEE REPORT: National Comparison of the Total and Sequestered Organic Matter Contents of Conventional and Organic Farm Soils**, *Advances in Agronomy*, September 11

**Pope Blasts Climate Change Doubters: Cites Moral Duty to Act**, *AP*, September 11

Pope Francis has sharply criticized climate change doubters, saying history will judge those who failed to take the necessary decisions to curb heat-trapping emissions blamed for the warming of the Earth. Francis has made caring for the environment a hallmark of his papacy, writing an entire encyclical about how the poor in particular are most harmed when multinationals move into exploit natural resources.

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## GENDER AND GENERATIONAL INCLUSION

**Closing the Gap between the Youth and Agriculture in Africa**, *CNBC Africa*, September 14

Agriculture and youth are a compatible pair, particularly in the African context: as one of the continent's most critical industries and biggest sources of income, contributing a quarter of Africa's total GDP and employing 70 percent of the labor force, it has the remarkable potential to empower what will be the youngest and biggest workforce in the world by 2040.

**Uniting the World's Most Promising Entrepreneurs Puts Women First and Advances Economic Prosperity for All**, *DipNote Blog*, *US Department of State*, September 12

It is clear the best ideas can come from anyone, anywhere around the globe. This idea is the impetus behind the 2017 Global Entrepreneurship Summit, cohosted by the United States and India. The summit presents an invaluable opportunity to advance global economic prosperity, convene entrepreneurs and investors from around the world seeking opportunities to take advantage of emerging trends, resolve persisting challenges, and spur innovation into action.

**SEE ALSO: Are Women Entrepreneurs the Key to Global Economic Development?**, *Devex*, September 12

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## MARKET ACCESS, TRADE, AND AGRIBUSINESS

**Israel Found an Unlikely Buyer for Its Lab-Grown Meat: China**, *Quartz*, September 13

China inked a deal with Israel that stands to give high-tech vegan meat companies an opening into the world's most populous country. Chinese meat imports were valued at more than \$10 billion in 2016, according to the International Trade Centre, which means there's a lot of room for meat alternative products to nip away at market share.

**SEE ALSO: Israel and China Sign \$300 Million 'Clean-Tech' Trade Agreement**, *Reuters*, September 11

**Corn, Soybean Futures Tumble on Larger Harvest Forecast**, *Wall Street Journal*, September 12

Corn and soybean prices fell after forecasters said this year's US harvest will be bigger than expected, setting up farmers for another year of large crops and low prices. The USDA estimated that farmers will harvest a record 4.4 billion bushels of soybeans this year at a yield of 49.9 bushels per acre, and 14.2 billion bushels of corn at a yield of 169.9 bushels per acre. That would be the third-largest annual haul for that crop.

**Dual Value in Water – There's High Stakes for Companies and Their Investors**, *Forbes*, September 11

Regional differences in the global water market present challenges to all organizations, for-profit and NGOs alike, making it tough to attract investors. Some of the regional differences that present challenges are climate change, population growth and size, geographical boundaries, and access to water. Worldwide, 47 percent of the world's population faces either a physical or economic barrier to clean water. But through public-private partnerships, we may be able to increase the long-term value of water supplies.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **UN General Assembly**

Date: September 12-25

Location: New York, NY

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## **Global Health and Development Symposium: Empowerment for Global Good**

Date: September 22

Location: Chicago, IL

## **The Future of Agri-Food Trade in the Northern Region: The Voice of the Producers**

Date: September 22

Location: Washington, DC

## **Fall 2017 Global Health Practitioner Conference**

Date: September 25-29

Location: Baltimore, MD

## **Global Youth Economic Opportunities Summit**

Date: September 27-29

Location: Washington, DC

## **2017 Borlaug Dialogue International Symposium**

Date: October 18-20

Location: Des Moines, IA

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