

# Global Food for Thought



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September 15-21, 2017

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## KEY ARTICLES

**[World Hunger Worsens as War, Climate Shocks Hit Food Access](#)**, *Washington Post*, September 19

The number of people suffering from hunger rose at the fastest pace since at least the beginning of this century, as conflicts and climate-related issues curbed access to food. Those categorized as hungry increased by about 38 million to 815 million in 2016, accounting for 11 percent of the global population, according to a report from the United Nations, with African nations being among the worst-hit.

**SEE REPORT: [World Hunger Again On the Rise, Driven By Conflict and Climate Change](#)**, *UN WFP*, September 15

**[Bill and Melinda Gates Grade the World's Health](#)**, *New York Times*, September 18

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Bill and Melinda Gates handed the world a report card assessing its progress on 18 global health indicators. In some areas, like infant mortality, vaccine use, and AIDS, progress is “pretty miraculous,” while developments in other areas have lagged. The report is aimed squarely at the world leaders gathering at the UN General Assembly this month.

**SEE REPORT: [Goalkeepers – the Stories Behind the Data](#), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, September 13**

**[FFAR Joins \\$45M Project to Boost Crop Yields through Photosynthesis](#), *Agri-Pulse*, September 15**

The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research has joined the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the UK Department for International Development in contributing to a \$45 million grant to the University of Illinois for the Realizing Increased Photosynthetic Efficiency project. The project aims to harness plants’ photosynthesis process to increase output in food crops including soybeans, cassava, and cowpeas, easing food insecurity around the world.

**SEE ALSO: [In Largest Grant to Date, FFAR Joins \\$45 Million Project to Increase Staple Crop Yields by Harnessing Photosynthesis](#), *FFAR*, September 15**

**[Farming and Rural Non-Farm Activities Can Provide Solutions to Rising Youth Unemployment in Africa](#), *FAO*, September 20**

Farming and rural non-farm-based activities still have untapped potential to generate employment opportunities for Africa’s rising youth population. Although 10 to 12 million young people join the labor force in Africa each year, only around 3 million jobs are created annually. The agricultural sector as well as rural non-farm have high potential to create more and better jobs, and build stronger rural communities.

**SEE ALSO: [“Decent Enough Work”—Should Africa’s Youth Hope for More?](#), *Institute of Development Studies*, September 18**

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## GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

**[UN Agency IFAD and Mars Incorporated Commit to Working Together to Improve the Livelihoods of Smallholder Farmers in Developing Countries](#), *IFAD*, September 18**

The International Fund for Agricultural Development and Mars Inc. signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work to increase incomes and economic opportunities for thousands of smallholder farmers in developing countries. Three-

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quarters of the world's poorest people and most undernourished people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and related activities for their livelihoods.

**SEE ALSO: [IFAD President: “We Shouldn’t Shy Away From Engaging the Private Sector”](#)**, *Devex*, September 19

**Agriculture Holds the Key to Unlocking Africa's Vast Economic Potential**, *Opinion*, Anna Jones, *Guardian*, September 17

Agriculture holds the key to unlocking Africa’s economic potential—41 million smallholders on a fertile continent that grows every crop imaginable. Let’s create jobs right along the supply chain, from cocoa bean to chocolate bar, and lift thousands out of poverty. Bring wealth by keeping the full value of this precious crop on the continent where it grows through harvesting, processing, packaging, marketing and transporting.

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## US GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

**Censky, McKinney Highlight USDA Roles, Priorities to Senators**, *Rural Radio Network*, September 19

The Trump administration's nominee for deputy agriculture secretary said that helping farmers and ranchers adapt to climate change will be among his top three priorities if confirmed for the post. Censky, who has been CEO of the American Soybean Association for the last two decades, said his other priorities are to diversify markets for farmers, including by expanding foreign trade and promoting local and regional food markets.

**Bogus “Organic” Foods Reach the US Because of Lax Enforcement at Ports, Inspectors Say**, *Washington Post*, September 18

Bogus “organic” products may be reaching the United States because of lax enforcement at US ports, according to a new audit by the United States Department of Agriculture which found that the USDA lacks procedures to check that a shipment meets organic standards. The report comes as the USDA faces growing doubts about whether food granted the “USDA Organic” label actually meets organic standards.

**SEE REPORT: [National Organic Program: International Trade Agreements and Arrangements](#)**, *USDA*, September 13

**Tillerson Says US Could Stay in Paris Climate Accord**, *Reuters*, September 17

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The United States could remain in the Paris climate accord under the right conditions, said Secretary of State Tillerson, signaling a shift in tone from the Trump administration. It would take four years for a country to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

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## BIG IDEAS AND EMERGING INNOVATIONS

### **In the Future, the World Could Face a Massive Food Shortage. One Accelerator Plans to Change That**, *Inc.*, September 19

Agricultural productivity must increase by 60 percent by 2050 to meet the world's food demands—and that increase in production must also happen in an environmentally sustainable system. The Yield Lab, a St. Louis-based accelerator that invests \$100,000 in six to eight agricultural technology companies per year, invests in tech that will help farmers feed more people and do that in a sustainable way.

### **Sheep Gene Insights Could Help Farmers Breed Healthier Animals**, *Science Daily*, September 18

Fresh insights into the genetic code of sheep could aid breeding programs to improve their health and productivity. Scientists have now mapped which genes are turned on and off in the different tissues and organs in a sheep's body, including insight into the function of genes linked to immunity and meat quality.

### **Scientists Work to Grow Food in Space**, *NPR*, September 17

When NASA astronauts are sent into space for a long journey—like to Mars—they probably won't be able to bring everything they need for survival with them, like enough food and water to survive for months or even years. The director of the Controlled Environment Agriculture Center at the University of Arizona has worked with NASA to develop a kind of greenhouse so astronauts can grow crops while in space.

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## FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

### **Global Call for Zero Tolerance on Food Loss and Waste**, *FAO*, September 20

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FAO director-general Graziano da Silva has joined in calls for a renewed global commitment to zero tolerance for food loss and waste. It has been shown that for every dollar companies have invested to reduce food loss and waste, they saved \$14 in operating costs. One-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally each year. This loss and waste occurs throughout the supply chain, from farm to fork.

**Getting Savvy? China Corn Farmers Set to Hold on to Crops, Bet Prices Will Rise**, *Reuters*, September 19

Corn farmers in China are likely to hold off on selling their latest crops, betting on higher prices down the line. Many are beginning to show the kind of appetite for risk that is common in major other agricultural powerhouses such as the United States. Until last year, the government bought farmers' crops at a minimum price as part of a decade-long stockpiling program that has now been scrapped.

**Startups Are Leading to Vital Changes in India's Farm Sector**, *Forbes*, September 18

By 2020, around 315 million Indians living in rural areas will be connected to the internet in the future, as compared with about 120 million now. As nearly 70 percent of rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood, farmers are forming a very significant chunk of this population now accessing the internet in rural areas.

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## NUTRITION AND HEALTH

**How Big Business Got Brazil Hooked on Junk Food**, *New York Times*, September 16

Western food companies—which have seen their growth slow in wealthy nations—are aggressively expanding in developing countries. This shift, say public health experts, is contributing to a new epidemic of diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses. Across the world, more people are now obese than underweight and many of them are both obese and malnourished.

**Poor Diet is a Factor in One in Five Deaths, Global Disease Study Reveals**, *Guardian*, September 14

Poor diet is a factor in one in five deaths around the world, according to the most comprehensive study ever carried out on the subject. Eating a diet that is high in salt and low in whole grains, fruit, nuts and seeds, and fish oils raises the risk of an early death.

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**SEE REPORT: A Systemic Analysis of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016**, *Lancet*, September 12

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## ENVIRONMENT, WATER, AND CLIMATE

**Guess What's Showing Up In Our Shellfish? One Word: Plastics**, *NPR*, September 19

Funded by the Canadian government and British Columbia's shellfish trade, Vancouver Island University planted thousands of clams and oysters. Three months later, they dissolved hundreds of them with chemicals, filtered out the biodegradable matter, and looked at what remained and found a rainbow of little plastic particles.

**Cities Turn to Other Cities for Help Fighting Climate Change**, *Wired*, September 19

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership group has announced plans for a leadership team to prepare and share detailed climate roadmaps for city leaders to mitigate global warming. The real problem, though, will be knowing if any cities are getting it right. All the pledges and coalitions in the world don't matter if cities don't know what they need to do, or can't do it.

**SEE REPORT: 8 Pioneering Cities Take Bold Steps to Deliver on the Paris Agreement**, *C40 Cities*, September 18

**Literally Lousy: Parasite Plagues World Salmon Industry**, *AP*, September 18

A surge of parasitic sea lice is disrupting salmon farms in the United States, Canada, Scotland, Norway, and Chile. The tiny lice attach themselves to salmon and feed on them, killing or rendering them unsuitable for dinner tables. Experts say defeating the lice will take a suite of new and established technology as the lice have evolved to survive pesticides.

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## GENDER AND GENERATIONAL INCLUSION

**Sowing the Seeds for Agriprenurship in Northwest Cambodia**, *Opinion*, Muneezay Jaffery, *Food Tank*, September 19

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The Green Shoots Foundation has recently organized a range of focus group discussions with secondary school students to evaluate their activities thus far and gain insight into how young people in rural communities feel about pursuing a career in agriculture. The focus is to introduce small-scale farming techniques within the school curriculum.

**Superpower India to Replace China as Growth Engine**, *Bloomberg*, September 17

India is poised to emerge as an economic superpower, driven in part by its young population, while China and the Asian Tigers age rapidly. India will drive the third great wave of Asia's growth, with a potential workforce set to climb from 885 million to 1.08 billion people in the next 20 years. This growth will bring rising economic potential to the country, driven by an increased share of women in the workforce.

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## MARKET ACCESS, TRADE, AND AGRIBUSINESS

**Bayer Says Needs More Time for Monsanto Deal Approval**, *Reuters*, September 19

German pharmaceuticals and agri-chemicals group Bayer said it would likely take until early next year to complete the planned \$66 billion takeover of US seeds group Monsanto, which it had previously expected to be under wraps by the end of 2017. The European Commission has been scrutinizing the takeover saying it was worried about competition in various pesticide and seeds markets.

**SEE ALSO: Bayer-Monsanto Merger Could Reshape EU Food Sector**, *EU Observer*, September 19

**At \$80 an Ounce, it's Not for Everyone. But Iranian Caviar is Eyeing a Comeback in the US**, *Los Angeles Times*, September 18

As Iran's economy tries to rebound from years of international sanctions, producers of black caviar are also eyeing a comeback. The fish, whose eggs make the choicest caviar, had been driven nearly to extinction by overfishing. Now, dozens of Iranian producers are raising sturgeon legally on fish farms, just as the nuclear agreement Iran signed has slowly reopened foreign markets to Iranian products.

**New FAO Resource Teaches Agro-Processors, Artisans How to Carve Out a Niche in the Tourism Sector with Good Packaging**, *FAO*, September 15

Tourism is a major foreign exchange earner and increasingly, the cornerstone of economic growth in much of the Caribbean. However, tourism's potential to diversify other linked sectors such as agriculture is often unexplored. With the rise of eco-

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tourism, visitors now seek out souvenir food products that are unique to the location, attractively priced and speak to the authenticity and heritage of a country.

**SEE REPORT: [Souvenir Food Packaging: A Training Resource for Small Food Processors and Artisans](#)**, *FAO, September 15*

**[Japan Expands Market Access for US Chipping Potatoes](#)**, *USDA, September 15*

Secretary of Agriculture Perdue announced that Japan is expanding market access for US chipping potatoes, resuming imports from Idaho for the first time in 11 years. The United States enjoys a 98 percent share of the Japanese potato market, with exports of fresh and chilled potatoes growing from \$1 million in 2010 to \$19 million in 2016.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **[UN General Assembly](#)**

Date: September 12-25  
Location: New York, NY

### **[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

### **[Esca Bona 2017](#)**

Date: October 16-18  
Location: Austin, TX

### **[2017 Borlaug Dialogue International Symposium](#)**

Date: October 18-20  
Location: Des Moines, IA

### **[World Leadership Conference: Global Citizens: Interconnected, Inquisitive, Engaged](#)**

Date: October 26-27  
Location: Houston, TX

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