

Global Food for Thought



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September 22-28, 2017

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KEY ARTICLES

Sixth Mass Extinction of Wildlife Also Threatens Global Food Supplies,

Guardian, September 26

Tens of thousands of rarely cultivated species could provide range of nutritious foods, resistant to disease and tolerant of the changing environment. But the destruction of wild areas, pollution, and overhunting has started a mass extinction of species on Earth. A new report sets out how both governments and companies can protect, enhance, and use the huge variety of little-known food crops.

SEE REPORT: [Mainstreaming Agrobiodiversity in Sustainable Food Systems,](#)

Bioversity International, September 26

SEE ALSO: [Mass Extinction Could Take Food off the Table,](#) *Deutsche Welle, September 26*

Global Carbon Emissions Stood Still in 2016, Offering Climate Hope, *Guardian*, September 28

Global emissions of climate-warming carbon dioxide remained static in 2016, a welcome sign that the world is making at least some progress in the battle against global warming by halting the long-term rising trend. This lack of growth is unprecedented in a time when the global economy is growing. However, significant increases were seen in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Syngenta Settles US Farmer Lawsuits in China Corn Trade Case, *Fox Business*, September 26

Swiss agribusiness giant Syngenta said it has agreed to settle tens of thousands of US lawsuits by farmers over the company's rollout of a genetically engineered corn seed variety before China approved it for imports. The dispute escalated into lawsuits alleging that Syngenta's move wrecked China as an increasingly important export market for US corn and resulted in price drops that hurt all producers.

SEE ALSO: Syngenta Agrees to Settle US Farmer Lawsuits over GMO Corn, *Reuters*, September 26

Coffee Farms Earn So Little that Supply May Soon Drop, *Reuters*, September 25

Farmers earn so little from coffee that many are likely to abandon their trees, endangering future supplies according to the International Coffee Organization. Farmers' low earnings in many countries are depressing supply, even as demand grows around 2 percent annually. Rabobank forecast a 2017-18 global coffee deficit of 6.1 million bags amid rising demand, and signs of tightening supplies are evident in top coffee grower Brazil, where inventories have dropped sharply.

1,000 Days of Immeasurable Cost and Irreparable Damage, *Podcast*, Roger Thurow and Alesha Black, *Chicago Council on Global Affairs*

Listen as Alesha Black, director of the Council's Global Food and Agriculture Program, and author and Council Senior Fellow Roger Thurow discuss the ongoing hunger crisis in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen on the Council's podcast, *Deep Dish on Global Affairs*. In addition, listen for a preview of Roger's own upcoming podcast series: *Outrage and Inspire*.

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GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Do More to Help Poor Nations Cope with Climate Change, IMF Tells Rich Countries, *Guardian*, September 28

The International Monetary Fund has told rich countries they must do more to help poor nations cope with climate change or suffer from the weaker global growth and higher migration flows that will inevitably result. The adverse impact of climate change would be long-lasting and would be felt through lower agricultural output, reduced productivity in sectors exposed to the weather, weaker investment, and poor health.

Forgotten Crop Strains Can Rescue Drought-Stricken Economies, *Financial Times*, September 27

The unique traits of local crop varieties are an essential asset if agriculture-dependent African economies are to weather the coming storms of climate change. Investing in agrobiodiversity innovations like this will yield tremendous returns, both in terms of rehabilitating ailing African economies and building a more sustainable, resilient, and nutritious food system for all.

A Recipe to End Hunger: Food Policies that Adapt to Climate Change, *Huffington Post*, September 27

On small farms across the globe, food and agriculture are the primary drivers of development and poverty reduction. Without more climate-resilient food systems, we risk even greater calamities and the unravelling of progress we've made in reducing hunger, protecting our planet, and supporting developing economies to reach their full potential.

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US GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

USDA Fails to Monitor Foreign Owners of Farmland, *Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting*, September 25

The Agriculture Foreign Investment Disclosure Act requires foreign investors to report transactions of farmland to the USDA, with noncompliance fines of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the land. But even as the amount of foreign-controlled farmland doubled in millions of acres between 2004 and 2014, the USDA has lapsed in enforcing the law.

Legislation to Increase Funding for USDA Export Programs, *National Hog Farmer*, September 22

There is strong agricultural support for the bipartisan legislation which would increase the funding for USDA export promotion programs. Proposed legislation would double the funding over the life of the next farm bill for the Foreign Market Development

Program and the Market Access Program. The Senators emphasize that FMD and MAP generated a net return of \$28.30 for every dollar invested.

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BIG IDEAS AND EMERGING INNOVATIONS

Review: ‘Bugs’ Is a Culinary Adventure. Insects Never Looked So Yummy, *New York Times*, September 26

The FAO has reported that the use of insects as food may have long-term benefits for the global food supply. “Bugs,” an entertaining and eye-opening documentary, will send moviegoers out with a feeling of culinary adventurousness, eager to sample well-prepared escamoles (ant larvae) or termite queen with mango.

Are You Ready for That Jelly? Why It’s Time to Start Eating Jellyfish, *Guardian*, September 25

The world has a jellyfish problem. Recently, they invaded a Scottish salmon farm, killing 300,000 fish overnight, shut down power stations, incapacitated a US nuclear warship, and had a significant socioeconomic impact on tourist areas. The answer? Cooking them, according to one Italian scientist.

New Index to Help Investors Gauge Food Diversity, *Reuters*, September 25

An EU-funded index measuring biodiversity in food production is expected to be launched next year, giving investors a benchmark for assessing how companies and governments are making food systems more resilient to climate change. The research will form the basis of the Agrobiodiversity Index and will include concrete criteria for measuring progress toward greater agrobiodiversity.

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

FAO Calls for Broader Livestock Vaccination to Keep Lumpy Skin Disease at Bay in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, *FAO*, September 26

FAO has called for broader cattle vaccination to keep lumpy skin disease, a cattle pox that can be deadly for cattle but does not affect humans, at bay in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The disease used to be confined to Africa only but emerged

in Turkey and then quickly spread through nine countries in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

A Battle to Save the World's Favorite Treat: Chocolate, *New York Times*,
September 25

Cacao is under constant threat from diseases and environmental challenges, exacerbated by our tendency to grow only a few varieties. In the late 1970s, a fungus tore through the Costa Rican cacao crop and reduced exports by 96 percent and the industry has never recovered. With chocolate demand on the rise, a shortage might be on the horizon.

Why Small, Local, Organic Farms aren't the Key to Fixing our Food System,
Opinion, Tamar Haspel, Washington Post, September 22

Local agriculture cannot fix that chemical-intensive system that crowds out biodiversity, depletes the soil, and pollutes the water. Having a food system that has multiple scales is better than having a preponderance of one scale (either large or small).

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NUTRITION AND HEALTH

How Public-Private Partnerships Can Wash Away Poor Sanitation, *Opinion*,
Aleem Walji, September 25

Unsafe management of fecal waste and wastewater is a major threat to public health for the nearly 2.4 billion people worldwide who lack a decent toilet. Sanitation is key to a healthy environment, yet access to sanitation remains far from universal. India's citizens need to feel fully engaged to create a successful movement for better health, cleaner water, and improved sanitation.

Call for Applications: IMMANA Fellowships, *Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University*

Tufts University and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine are pleased to announce the last round of Post-doctoral Fellowships for emerging leaders in agriculture, nutrition, and health research. Concept notes should be submitted as soon as possible, and will be accepted on a rolling basis until February 1, 2018.

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ENVIRONMENT, WATER, AND CLIMATE

The Hidden Toll of Floods, *NPR, September 26*

Hurricanes and floods don't just wash away crops and livestock and businesses. Individuals who experienced severe unexpected flooding had much lower aspirations. A study has found that they were less likely to plant seeds or take loans to expand their businesses.

SEE REPORT: [Aspirations and the Role of Social Protection: Evidence from a Natural Disaster in Rural Pakistan](#), *World Development, September 2017*

As China Has Boosted Renewable Energy It's Moved Dirty Coal Production to Africa, *Quartz, September 26*

China is transforming its sources of energy domestically in a bid to reverse decades of environmental pollution. But the switch to renewable energy has brought about a conundrum: what to do with the jobs and industries that have no future in this new system? Several African countries are accepting China's subsidized development through the construction of outdated, dirty coal plants.

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GENDER AND GENERATIONAL INCLUSION

Work with Women Not for Them, Say Advocates on World Contraception Day, *Devex, September 26*

Research demonstrates that when a woman chooses a method of family planning for herself, she'll use it more consistently and correctly, and for a longer period of time. The program is being piloted in 11 sites across Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, attracting girls between 15 and 19 years old, and achieving average contraceptive adoption rates of 28 to 59 percent after a single contact.

How a Venezuelan Chef Is Teaching Women to Make Chocolate and Money, *NPR, September 25*

Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe is a Venezuelan chocolatier who has dedicated her life to proving that her country's cacao can propel an entire industry. She opened a school that trains women with lectures on gender equality, competitiveness, fair-trade practices, and economic independence, guiding the women from home cook to micro-entrepreneur.

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MARKET ACCESS, TRADE, AND AGRIBUSINESS

Drowning in Grain – How Big Ag Sowed Seeds of a Profit-Slashing Glut,

Reuters, September 27

A global grains glut is now in its fourth year, with supplies bloated by favorable weather, increasingly high-tech farm practices, and tougher plant breeds. Some analysts say the firms have effectively innovated their way into a stubbornly oversupplied market. The bumper harvests may actually harm poor communities more than they benefit through in food savings because lower prices depress farm incomes in the same areas.

China Postpones Food Import Controls after Global Outcry, *Washington Post, September 26*

China has delayed enforcing sweeping new controls on food imports following complaints by the United State, Europe, and other trading partners that they would disrupt billions of dollars in trade. The dispute added to trade tensions with the United States and Europe, as they urged China to follow global practice.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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

CIAT 50th Anniversary Celebration

Date: November 8-9

Location: Cali, Columbia

BCFN 8th International Forum on Food and Nutrition

Date: December 4-5

Milano, Italy

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