

Global Food for Thought



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October 13-19, 2017

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KEY ARTICLES

Food and Security Symposium 2018: Mark Your Calendars and Engage the Next Generation

Mark your calendars for the 2018 Global Food Security Symposium on March 21 and 22, 2018 in Washington, DC! Do you know of a student who is interested in shaping new ideas for food security and agricultural development? Encourage them to apply now to join the 2018 Next Generation Student Delegation. Applications are due on or before Sunday, November 5.

This New Tool is the Latest Effort by the Gates Foundation to Bring Innovation to Payment Infrastructure, *Devex, October 17*

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will release free and open source software to address the lack of interoperability between financial service providers and payments

platforms. The code is called Mojaloop, building on the Swahili word *moja*, which means one. The Gates Foundation expects the code will serve as a reference model for payment operability across Africa and Asia.

SEE ALSO: [Gates Foundation Launches Open Platform to Connect Mobile Finance in Developing World](#), *Forbes*, October 16

Featured Commentary—[Recipe for Creating Zero Hunger](#), *Chicago Council on Global Affairs*, October 19

Ertharin Cousin says that ending hunger and chronic malnutrition remains within our grasp. The ingredients required for ending hunger also include sustainable and durable food systems (from fork to farm), elimination of malnutrition (particularly stunting), elimination of food waste, and universal access to nutritious food all year long—all quite feasible.

[Harness 'Natural Enemies' to Fight Pests and Protect Crops: World Food Prize Winner](#), *Reuters*, October 17

African farmers can lose up to half their harvest to pests; having the right equipment to store crops can do a lot to boost a farmer's income. A more effective strategy would keep pest away from the beginning. This is done by strategically planning other crops to invite insects that can keep other pests away. Wild grasses can also be planted around the edge of the field, which attract pests outside of the main crops.

[UN Report on Rohingya Hunger is Shelved at Myanmar's Request](#), *Guardian*, October 16

The UN food aid agency withdrew a critical report revealing desperate hunger among the persecuted Rohingya population after the Myanmar government demanded it be taken down. The assessment by the World Food Programme warned that more than 80,000 children under the age of five were “wasting.”

[How Data Science and Gene Editing Will Transform Farming](#), *Wall Street Journal*, October 15

Now there are new technologies on the rise that promise to reshape the world of agriculture. Gene editing lets scientists remove negative traits from an organism or add positive ones without introducing any foreign DNA. Proponents say the method is simply what farmers have been doing for centuries—breeding for certain traits—only done much faster and more efficiently.

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GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Africa Key to Feeding Nine Billion People by 2050, Says AfDB, *Guardian*,
October 18

The President of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and 2017 World Food Prize Laureate, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina described the challenge of feeding the world as immense, with the need for rapid increases in global food, feed, and biofuel production to cater for a global population of 9 billion people by 2050. He considers investment in agriculture key to a solution.

Central African Republic Children Starve as Aid Workers Flee Fighting, *Reuters*,
October 17

The United Nations stated that children are starving to death in Central African Republic because violence has forced aid workers to pull out. Lack of funds had already forced aid workers to halve food aid and, in some places, stop it completely despite widespread malnutrition in children under five-years-old. The number of displaced people has increased 50 percent to 600,000, in addition to the 500,000 who have fled into neighboring countries.

Is It Possible to Alter the Future of Migration?, *The Wire*, October 16

More people have been forced to flee their homes due to hunger, poverty, and an increase in extreme weather events linked to climate change. One solution is to invest in food security and rural development. This can address factors that compel people to move by creating business opportunities and new jobs for young people.

Guest Commentary—On World Food Day, Recognizing America’s Proud History of Feeding the Hungry, *Chicago Council on Global Affairs*, October 16

Paul Weisenfeld says that we need to reaffirm our commitment to ending hunger. Hunger is a short path to hopelessness and desperation. That’s why America’s foreign assistance and humanitarian interventions have always focused on meeting this basic human need. Feeding the hungry also reflects a deeply felt American value that recognizes our common humanity.

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US GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

The US Is Fighting Canada over Wine, and the EU Wants a Seat at the Table,
CNBC, October 18

Argentina and the European Union have filed a request to be party to the negotiations between the United States and Canada as the United States fights a Canadian law that sidelines the display of imported wine. The United States filed its first complaint under President Obama in January, and President Trump followed up earlier in October.

Lighthizer Shows Frustration with Lack of Progress on NAFTA Talks, *Agri-Pulse*, October 17

US Trade Representative Lighthizer expressed sharp disappointment with his Mexican and Canadian counterparts. A sign of the difficulties may be reflected in Lighthizer's announcement that a deal would not be reached this year, as was earlier hoped. Instead, he said there will be one more round of talks in November, in Mexico City, with the goal of finishing a new agreement by the end of March 2018.

A NAFTA Battleground on the Shores of Canada, *New York Times*, October 16

An American company's scuttled plans to build a quarry in Nova Scotia have into a case study of the kind of disputes that threaten to derail the North American Free Trade Agreement. The mining company filed a complaint against the Canadian government, claiming unfair treatment under the investor-state dispute settlement provision. A NAFTA panel of lawyers will begin deciding how much Canada must pay in 2018.

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BIG IDEAS AND EMERGING INNOVATIONS

A MacArthur 'Genius' on Overcoming Modern Farm Slavery, *New York Times*, October 18

Greg Asbed was just awarded a fellowship from the MacArthur Foundation to support his work in agricultural slavery. He recently got companies like McDonald's and Walmart to agree to pay a small premium for each unit of crop they purchase. In return, growers agree to abide by a code of conduct on issues like worker safety and pay. Asbed plans to put the entirety of his grant back into the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

This Company is Using Food to Preserve Food and Fight Food Waste, *Food Tank*, October 16

Apeel Sciences is rolling out a product for fresh food growers and retailers that provides a protective layer for fresh produce. When applied to harvested produce, the product helps to maintain freshness, minimizing food waste, and thus providing benefits to growers, distributors, and consumers. Growers can avoid harvesting before ripeness, and consumers can purchase healthier, longer-lasting produce.

Kimbal Musk Wants to Feed America, Silicon Valley-Style, *New York Times*, October 16

Kimbal Musk wants to do for food what his brother has done for electric cars and space travel. Musk is promoting a philosophy he calls “real food,” which nourishes the body, the farmer, and the planet. Musk wants to create a network of business, educational, and agricultural ventures big enough to swing the nation’s food system back to one based on healthy, local food grown on chemical-free farms.

The Race to Find Meatless Protein Products, *Wall Street Journal*, October 15

The future of protein could be a meal worm, a fungus, an obscure plant, or a run-of-the-mill pea. Companies are expanding their portfolios to serve consumers concerned not just about what they eat, but how their food is grown. Food companies are also looking for ingredients that address concerns that meat production, because of the amount of land, water, and energy it requires, won’t meet the world’s growing protein needs.

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

The Pursuit of a Low-Emissions Cow, *Devex*, October 17

Researchers are on the hunt for a cow that produces less methane, one of the major contributors to climate change. If and when those green genes can be easily isolated, they could be spread throughout global cattle populations. Changing consumption may prove impossible, so internationally, researchers have been working on changing the cow.

PPPs in Agriculture—An Opportunity for Improved Extension and Advisory Services, *Opinion*, Paul McNamara, Austen Moore, Cristina Alvarez Mingote, *Devex*, October 16

Citizens of many developing countries often expect that key services—education, health care, and agriculture, for example—will be provided by governments. Yet increasingly the private sector is seen as an alternative to constrained and largely ineffective public systems, and has seen notable successes in rapidly developing agricultural systems and increasing production.

Agriculture: More than Word, Time for Action, *Opinion*, Taiwo Odukoya, *Guardian*, October 15

Economic theorists have agreed on the imperative of agriculture to boosting industrialization. Agriculture has remained vital for reducing urban unemployment and income inequality, and if there is anything close to a silver bullet for the reduction of poverty and food sufficiency, it is agriculture. We need public-private partnerships, multi stakeholder platforms, and collaborations to make a difference.

G7 Countries Can Help Smallholders and Family Farmers Access Data Vital for Building Resilience, *FAO, October 14*

Access to reliable information, including weather patterns and market conditions, is essential for empowering farmers, especially those in developing countries. The FAO director-general said the G7 countries can play a leading role and help promote more resilient food systems. This is also key for strengthening livelihoods by disseminating information on income generation, especially for poor women.

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NUTRITION AND HEALTH

45 Countries Are Facing Severe Hunger—We Can Do More to Help, *Opinion, William Lambers, The Hill, October 16*

Currently, Nigeria, South Sudan, Yemen, and Somalia are threatened by war causing around 20 million people to be at risk of starvation. Fighting hunger must be a top priority for government leaders and the public. A global school lunch program should remain the goal of the United States because school meals are a powerful incentive for families to send their children to school and for countries to build a better future through education.

The Search for Sugar Substitutes, *Wall Street Journal, October 15*

Food makers are racing to find acceptable alternatives to sugar. Now researchers at food giants are looking for new ways to make foods sweet without putting people's health at risk, such as manipulating granules of sugar to make them taste sweeter. But sugar is still important because it acts as a preservative since it binds with water, not allowing bacteria to grow.

Read This and You May Never Eat Chicken Again, *Guardian, October 13*

Most meat animals, across most of the planet, are raised with the assistance of doses of antibiotics on most days of their lives. For most people, antibiotic resistance is a hidden epidemic unless they have the misfortune to contract an infection themselves or have a family member or friend unlucky enough to become infected. By 2050, antibiotic resistance is estimated to cause a staggering 10 million deaths a year.

Guest Commentary—We Really Are What We Eat, and That's What Makes Biodiversity So Critical to How Our Food is Grown, *Chicago Council on Global Affairs, October 11*

Ginya Truitt Nakata from The Nature Conservatory links nutrition and sustainable production. She says that amid today's challenges, agricultural biodiversity needs to be at the center of our efforts to make agriculture more productive and environmentally sustainable. We need to refocus our efforts from simply producing more food to producing more nutritious food.

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ENVIRONMENT, WATER, AND CLIMATE

Why Climate Change puts the Poorest Most at Risk, *Financial Times*, October 17

The increased frequency of extreme events caused by climate change will do relatively more damage to the poorest countries. This is because of two reasons: these countries are located in the regions of the world most likely to be adversely affected; and they are least able to protect themselves against, or manage, the impact. Moreover, the impact is long-lasting.

G20 Countries Need to Stop Using Export Credit Agencies to Finance Fossil Fuel Projects, *Opinion*, Kate DeAngelis, *Devex*, October 17

Although at least seven major countries have made commitments to phase out coal power domestically, their export credit agencies, or ECAs, have poured money into coal plants and other fossil fuel projects in other countries. The agencies are major contributors to climate change.

Pope Francis Urges Action on Climate Change and Conflict to Address Migration, *FAO*, October 16

Pope Francis demanded that world governments collectively commit to end rising world hunger by resolving the conflicts and climate change-related disasters that force people to leave their homes in search of their daily bread. The answer wasn't to reduce the world's population but rather to better manage the planet's abundant resources and prevent waste.

SEE ALSO: Pope at UN Demands Response to Hunger, Climate, Migration, *Associated Press*, October 16

Plant More Trees to Combat Climate Change: Scientists, *Reuters*, October 16

Better stewardship of the land could have a bigger role in fighting climate change than previously thought. Natural climate change solutions like planting forests, protecting peat lands, and better land management could account for 37 percent of all actions needed by 2030 under the Paris plan. The United Nation's current estimates for nature's potential were up to 30 percent compared to 2014.

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GENDER AND GENERATIONAL INCLUSION

Gaining Ground: Nicaragua's Women Coffee Farmers, *Al Jazeera*, October 18

Coffee is one of the world's most highly-traded commodities, and in Nicaragua, women undertake 70 percent of the work but own just 23 percent of the land, facilities, and products. Additionally, women's work in agriculture tends to go unpaid. Fatima Ismael is committed to narrowing the gender gap in Nicaragua by creating work opportunities in the coffee business and helping women buy their own land.

Celebrating International Day of Rural Women, *Food Tank*, October 15

The United Nation's International Day of Rural Women celebrates and honors the role of rural women. It recognizes the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security. The theme for 2017 is challenges and opportunities in climate-resilient agriculture for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

Women Can Propel India to Second Green Revolution: Agricultural Minister, *The Economic Times*, October 15

Women can propel India towards second green revolution provided they get opportunities and adequate facilities, said Indian Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh. He said that the government through its various policies is providing opportunities to women such as organic farming and self-employment schemes

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MARKET ACCESS, TRADE, AND AGRIBUSINESS

Why Trade Is So Crucial for Food Companies, *Wall Street Journal*, October 17

Feeding the world while dealing with the complexities of global trade has never been so difficult and no industry has a bigger stake in succeeding abroad than the US food sector. You can push one metric ton of grain 652 miles with a gallon of fuel. But we need to produce more food in the next 40 years than we produced in the last 10,000.

Mind Your TRQs: a Brexit Lesson in Global Trade, *Financial Times*, October 16

Officials from member governments will consider an initial UK-EU proposal on dividing up existing tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) on food after Brexit on the basis of current consumption at the WTO in Geneva this week. While TRQs allow in imports, they do so in an inefficient way that creates new distortions and impediments to further liberalization.

Inside Mars, Inc.'s \$1 Billion Pivot toward Sustainability, *Devex, October 16*

For years, Mars had worked to improve sustainability efforts in factories. But it hadn't worked as much with the 1 million smallholder farmers at the far tail of its supply chain. That realization has become the inspiration for a \$1 billion investment over three years, called the Sustainable in a Generation Plan, aimed at tackling issues from climate change, to poverty in its supply chains, to resource scarcity.

Mega-Mergers Will Squeeze Farmers, Push Up Food Prices, Experts Warn, *Reuters, October 13*

If the world's major agriculture companies go ahead with planned mergers, farmers will face higher costs and food will eventually become more expensive to buy. Since 2015, several high-profile agribusiness deals have been completed. Soon, three firms could control more than 60 percent of global seed and pesticide markets.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Bending the Arc Towards Global Health Equity

Date: November 8

Location: Chicago, IL

CIAT 50th Anniversary Celebration

Date: November 8-9

Location: Cali, Colombia

BCFN 8th International Forum on Food and Nutrition

Date: December 4-5

Milano, Italy

Women in Agriculture Conference

Date: December 9

Location: Abingdon, VA

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