

# Global Food for Thought



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November 10-16, 2017

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*Please note, we will be taking next week off to celebrate Thanksgiving. The news brief will return on December 1.*

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## KEY ARTICLES

### **Next Monday: Ertharin Cousin on Eating Well Beyond Thanksgiving, a Facebook Live Conversation**

Join the Council's newest Distinguished Fellow, Ertharin Cousin, former Director of the World Food Prize, at 10:00 a.m. CDT on Monday, November 20 for a conversation and Q&A on the challenges surrounding food access and waste—both in the US and around the world. Tune in to the Global Food and Agriculture Program's Facebook page for the event, bring your questions, and follow the Council at @GlobalAgDev on Twitter for event updates.

### **Gates Foundation Sees Gulf, China as Most Promising Markets for Future Partnering**, *Devex, November 15*

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation sees China and the Gulf as among the most promising regions to develop future partnerships on global health and development. Although the foundation will continue to push for other traditional donors to maintain

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and even increase their funding, it views the future of development funding as being led primarily by developing countries themselves.

**Switching to Organic Farming Could Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Study Shows**, *Guardian*, November 14

Converting land from conventional agriculture to organic production could reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the run-off of excess nitrogen from fertilizers, and cut pesticide use. It would also be feasible to convert large amounts of currently conventionally farmed land without catastrophic harm to crop yields and without needing huge amounts of new land.

**SEE REPORT: Strategies for Feeding the World More Sustainably with Organic Agriculture**, *Journal of Nature Communications*, November 14

**How War Created the Cholera Epidemic in Yemen**, *New York Times, Opinion, Alia Allana*, November 12

Cholera in Yemen is a man-made disaster, and its spread and casualties are tied to the politics of the war. Bombings have destroyed hospitals, sewage plants, and public water systems in Yemen. The United Nations estimates that about seven million people are on the brink of famine in Yemen and nearly 900,000 are infected with cholera. An unrelenting blockade threatens a catastrophic increase in both disease and hunger.

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## GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

**UN Talks Plant Seed for Greener, More Climate-Savvy Agriculture**, *Reuters*, November 15

UN climate talks in Bonn broke a long stalemate on agriculture, an important step which is expected to lead to wiser and better funded government policies to help farmers. With the deadlock now resolved, the United Nations can start to focus more on “real-life solutions” to make agriculture less polluting and better able to cope with climate change.

**FAO Launches New Climate-Smart Agriculture Web Platform**, *FAO*, November 10

To help steer our food systems in a sustainable direction, the FAO has produced a new sourcebook for how to implement climate-smart approaches to agriculture. Hunger and poverty can be tackled together through this approach that recognizes the critical linkages between sustainable agriculture and strategies that promote resource-use efficiency.

**To Tackle Climate Change, We Need to Invest in Smallholder Farmers**, *Devex, Opinion, Margarita Astralaga*, November 10

When it comes to the impact of climate change, it is the millions of poor smallholder farmers worldwide who bear the brunt of the increasingly devastating losses. Our

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best chance of adapting to these rapidly changing conditions is through investing in smallholder farmers while equipping them with the skills and resources to mitigate the impact of agriculture on the environment.

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## US GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

**Monsanto, US Farm Groups Sue California Over Glyphosate Warnings**, *Reuters*, November 15

Monsanto and US farm groups sued California to stop the state from requiring cancer warnings on products containing the widely used weed killer glyphosate, which the company sells to farmers to apply to its GMO crops. California added the main ingredient in Monsanto's herbicide Roundup to its list of cancer-causing chemicals and will require that products containing glyphosate carry warnings by July 2018.

**New Map of Worldwide Croplands Supports Food and Water Security**, *USGS*, November 14

A new map was released detailing croplands worldwide in the highest resolution yet, helping to ensure global food and water security in a sustainable way. The map establishes that there are 1.87 billion hectares of croplands in the world, which is 15 to 20 percent higher than former assessments. Earlier studies showed either China or the United States as having the highest net cropland area, but this study shows that India ranks first.

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## BIG IDEAS AND EMERGING INNOVATIONS

**Nigerian Agritech Firm Farmcrowdy Launches Mobile App**, *Guardian*, November 14

Farmcrowdy, Nigeria's first and leading digital agriculture platform is reshaping the way in which people participate in farming and food production, through using their online platform to source funds from sponsors, whose money is used to secure land, plant crops, and meet the funding needs of boosting food production with small scale farmers.

**Miniature Robots Could Cut Pesticide Use on Farms in Future**, *Guardian*, November 14

Miniature robot farmers may be the answer to concerns over chemical use on farms and cutting down on food waste, as well as easing labor shortages. They could become available in as little as three years, but that would be likely to take large investment and a high degree of entrepreneurialism in the private sector.

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## **Organic Agriculture Can Help Feed the World, but Only If We Eat Less Meat and Stop Wasting Food**, *Los Angeles Times*, November 14

Experts have thrown out several strategies to deal with the impending food security problem, without coming to a clear agreement on which one would be best. Among the options: improving efficiencies in producing crops and using resources; reducing food waste; cutting down the animal products we eat; or resorting to more organic agriculture.

## **Weather Forecasts Help Ethiopian Herders, Farmers Fight Climate Extremes**, *Reuters*, November 12

Prolonged drought and erratic rainfall across the country have hit harvests and livestock, eating into farmers' and herders' income and meals. To remedy this, a project hopes to help Ethiopian herders and farmers access weather information to make more informed decisions and better absorb climate shocks. The data will help herders and farmers predict the availability of water and grass for grazing.

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## FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

### **The Global Partnership Working Around the Clock to Save Wild Relatives of Major Crops**, *FoodTank*, November 15

A global partnership managed by The Crop Trust and the Millennium Seedbank at Kew is scaling up a ten-year effort to catalog, conserve, and prepare the genetics of other wild cousins of major crops, known as crop wild relatives, in light of increasing stresses to agriculture including climate change and population growth.

### **From Cattle to Capital: How Agriculture Bred Ancient Inequality**, *NPR*, November 15

The gap between rich and poor is one of the great concerns of modern times. Measuring inequality in societies that didn't leave written records is hard, of course, but physical ruins remain. Increasing inequality arrived with agriculture. When people started growing more crops, settling down and building cities, the rich usually got much richer, compared to the poor.

**SEE REPORT: A Deep Divide Between Rich and Poor Dates Back Millennia**, *Nature*, November 15

### **Why Food Waste Can Only Remedy—Not Solve—America's Hunger Problem**, *FoodTank*, November 15

While giving out food waste to the poor has long been used as a solution to food insecurity, Andrew Fisher, a food security expert, says the moral imperative around reducing waste has also contributed to the never-ending nature of the problem. According to him, driven by inefficiencies in the supply chain, the charitable food system was invented as a morally preferable alternative to throwing away "perfectly good food."

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## **Stop Pretending the Estate Tax Has Anything to Do with Us Family Farmers,**

*Washington Post, Opinion, Jim Goodman, November 15*

As Republicans push ahead with their tax reform plan, the small farmer is again invoked. This time it's about the estate tax. But few farmers put the elimination of this tax on the top of their wish lists. It is a sales pitch, nothing more, again capitalizing on that mystique of the family farm that people hold so dear. Getting rid of the estate tax is a gift to the very rich, not to farmers.

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## **NUTRITION AND HEALTH**

### **Antibiotic Resistance Is 'Crisis We Cannot Ignore,' UN Warns, Calling for Responsible Use of These Medicines,**

*United Nations, November 13*

Antibiotic resistance is a global crisis that cannot be ignored. Antibiotic resistance is rising to dangerously high levels in all parts of the world and threatening our ability to treat common infectious diseases. If we don't tackle this threat with strong, coordinated action, antimicrobial resistance will take us back to a time when people feared common infections.

### **Choking on Air in New Delhi,**

*New York Times, November 12*

One year after a record-breaking toxic haze blanketed New Delhi, prompting school closings, car pileups and flight delays, the smog is back and it's worse than ever. The main culprit is the annual burning of crop stubble by farmers in nearby states who are too poor to clear their fields for replanting by less polluting means. But rather than help farmers, state governments simply issue bans that nobody pays much attention to.

### **Two-Large US Farm Study Finds No Cancer Link to Monsanto Weedkiller,**

*Washington Post, November 11*

A large long-term study on the use of the weed killer glyphosate by agricultural workers has found no firm link between exposure to the pesticide and cancer. The findings may influence a crucial decision due by the end of the year on whether glyphosate should be relicensed for sale across the European Union.

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## **ENVIRONMENT, WATER, AND CLIMATE**

### **Switching to Organic Farming Could Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Study Shows,**

*Guardian, November 14*

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Converting land from conventional agriculture to organic production could reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the run-off of excess nitrogen from fertilizers, and cut pesticide use. It would also be feasible to convert large amounts of currently conventionally farmed land without catastrophic harm to crop yields and without needing huge amounts of new land.

### **Better Soil Could Trap as Much Planet-Warming Carbon as Transport**

**Produces: Study**, *Reuters*, November 14

Improving soil health in farmlands could capture extra carbon equivalent to the planet-warming emissions generated by the transport sector, one of the world's most polluting industries. The United States has the highest total annual potential to store carbon in the soil, followed by India, China, Russia, and Australia, if soil management is improved.

### **Agriculture Can Curb Planet Warming Emissions 'Immediately': UN**, *Reuters*, November 10

The global agricultural sector can curb emissions immediately and provide a window for fossil fuel-guzzling energy and transport sectors to decarbonize. Agriculture, forestry, and changes in land use produce 21 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, making them the second largest emitter after the energy sector. However, agriculture has great potential to store carbon and reduce greenhouse gases in our lifetime.

### **Is Sustainable Land and Water Management Compatible with Small-Scale Farming under Climate Change?**, *AllAfrica*, November 10

Participants from different organizations met to discuss how to transform agricultural development in the face of climate change. Climate change adaptation in agriculture will be driven by growing pressure on water and land. Further, food production will have to keep up with increasing demand. Managing agricultural water availability access and use is key to success.

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## **GENDER AND GENERATIONAL INCLUSION**

### **From Cattle to Capital: How Agriculture Bred Ancient Inequality**, *NPR*, November 15

The gap between rich and poor is one of the great concerns of modern times. It's even driving archaeologists to look more closely at wealth disparities in ancient societies. A new report states that increasing inequality arrived with agriculture. After the advent of agriculture, wealth gets much more unequally distributed in the Old World, Europe, and Asia, than it does in the New World.

**SEE REPORT: Greater Post-Neolithic Wealth Disparities in Eurasia than in North America and Mesoamerica**, *Nature*, November 15

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**World Vasectomy Day: How to Engage Men in Family Planning Efforts**, *Devex*, November 15

We are living in an era focused on women and girls, which is appropriate given their persistent gaps in global access to education, health care, and economic opportunity. There is also a gap in funding and research to engage men, puts even greater pressure on women to shoulder the burden of contraception on their own. Involving men in the broader conversation is key to sustainable family planning.

**Women's Empowerment in Indian Agriculture: Does Market Orientation of Farming Systems Matter?**, *Food Security*, November 13

Women are disempowered in two major domains of agriculture—resources (access and decision-making) and leadership (group membership). Empowerment levels were significantly higher for women belonging to cash-cropping households, followed by food-cropping, and landless households. Other significant determinants of empowerment scores are women's age, education level, and household-level characteristics.

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## MARKET ACCESS, TRADE, AND AGRIBUSINESS

**Global Herbicides Market Estimated to Reach US \$29.30 Billion by 2025**, *Markets Insider*, November 15

In terms of revenue, Europe held the largest share of more than 25 percent of the global herbicides market in 2016. Need to increase the total agricultural productivity, to cope up with the growing population is the prime factors driving the demand for herbicides. However, Europe is anticipated to witness a decline in its market share as a lot of people in the region have started using bio-based agro-solutions.

**SEE REPORT: Herbicides Market - Global Industry Analysis, Size, Share, Growth, Trends, and Forecast, 2017 – 2025**, *Transparency Market Research*, November 15

**US Pumpkin Growers Toast Nontraditional Demand for Fruit**, *Reuters*, November 14

Farmers are cheering a bumper crop of pumpkins this year, due to dry weather, and celebrating a year-round boost in demand aided by new avenues of growth in such products as flavored coffee and pet food. Any unharvested pumpkins will help protect the soil for incoming or rotation crops such as corn and soybeans.

**How an Oil Giant (Russia) Came to Dominate Wheat**, *Bloomberg*, November 12

Russia, a leading exporter of crude oil for decades now, is increasingly dominating another critical global commodity: wheat. About half the countries in the world import wheat from Russia. Some of the biggest buyers are situated a short distance away, in the Middle East and North Africa, but demand comes from as far away as Mexico and Indonesia.

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### **Business can Sugar the Brexit Pill**, *Financial Times*, November 10

George Weston, chief executive of Associated British Foods, sees two big opportunities for British Agriculture in Brexit. Firstly, the 16 percent fall in the value of sterling against the euro since the referendum vote last year has made British exports cheaper. Secondly, he believes that rid of the shackles of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy, farmers can be incentivized to produce more efficiently.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Beyond the Plough: The New Faces of Food**

Date : November 28

Location : Chicago, IL

### **GIANT Health Event**

Date: November 28-30

Location: London, England

### **3rd International Conference on Global Food Security**

Date: December 3-6

Location: Cape Town, South Africa

### **BCFN 8<sup>th</sup> International Forum on Food and Nutrition**

Date: December 4-5

Location: Milano, Italy

### **Young Farmers Conference**

Date: December 8

Location: Pocantico Hills, NY

### **ZERO WASTE – “Going Back is Going Forward”**

Date: December 7-8

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

### **Women in Agriculture Conference**

Date: December 9

Location: Abingdon, VA

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