



## Hunger is an Agriculture Issue

### Why?

- With the global population expected to reach 9.8 billion people by 2050, farmers around the world will have to dramatically increase food production to meet demand in the face of climate change, land and water scarcity and the demands for more diverse, protein-rich diets among populations with increasing incomes.<sup>i,ii</sup>
- Yet since 1990, aggregate farm yield growth has stagnated and even reversed course in some areas. The USDA projects that growth in global farm yields will continue to fall, threatening the welfare of a large share of the world's population.<sup>iii</sup>
- The majority of the world's poor live in rural areas and work in the agricultural sector, yet they are not able to feed their families.<sup>iv</sup>
- As economies develop, they become customers for US commodities, products and services, so it's in U.S. agriculture's interest to help develop more efficient food systems;
  - 11 out of 15 of our top agricultural trading partners are former U.S. aid recipients.<sup>v</sup>
  - Between 2003 and 2013, U.S. farm exports to Africa increased by more than 200%.<sup>vi</sup>
- The U.S. is one of the most agriculturally advanced countries in the world, and is therefore well-positioned to help.
- The agricultural community has an important role to play in helping to develop more efficient food systems here in the US and abroad.

### Hunger and Agriculture in the U.S.

- In 2015, 1 in 4 Americans participated in 1 or more of 15 domestic food and nutrition programs (WIC, SNAP, School lunch, etc.). (Source: USDA)
  - About 1 in 7 Americans received SNAP benefits in 2018.<sup>vii</sup>
- SNAP participation varies geographically, with 13% in metro areas, 15% in small towns, and 16% in rural areas participating in the program on average between 2012 and 2016.<sup>viii</sup>
- Improving food systems and reducing hunger has a high return on investment, especially during an economic downturn. Economists estimate that in a weak economy, every SNAP dollar that households redeem expands the economy by about \$1.70.<sup>ix</sup>
- Maintaining support for domestic nutrition programs adds value to American agriculture. The Economic Research Service at USDA calculates \$1 billion in SNAP benefits generates \$92.6 million of agricultural production and \$32.3 million of agricultural GDP or value added.<sup>x</sup>



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## **International Hunger and Agriculture**

- Reducing global hunger and poverty is an important US foreign policy strategy for fostering long term economic opportunities, reducing political instability, advancing diplomacy and saving millions of lives.
- Ironically, many of the extreme poor living in rural areas are smallholder farmers who cannot produce enough to feed their families.<sup>xi</sup>
- Most population growth will occur in less developed countries that are already food insecure. Between 2017 and 2030, populations are expected to increase by 1 billion in Africa and 443 million in Asia.<sup>xii</sup>
- A healthy US agricultural sector is critical to global food security. As major producers and exporters—accounting for roughly one out of four metric tons of corn and wheat exported globally—American farmers help keep food affordable around the world.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Without sustained progress, recurring price volatility and food shortages will contribute to political instability. Malnutrition will likely lead to mass migration and intensifying health issues. Diplomatic efforts to maintain peace will be far more difficult wherever food shortages contribute to extremism and conflict. The hopes of the United States and other developed nations for economic development in poor countries will continually be frustrated if populations are unable to feed themselves.<sup>xiv, xv</sup>
- Efforts are needed to close the yield gap between rich and poor countries through the adoption of productive agriculture systems, to ensure that all people have access to affordable safe and nutritious foods from both domestic and international sources.
- Agricultural development is the most effective intervention to combatting hunger and poverty. According to the World Bank, every dollar invested in agriculture is two to three times as effective in reducing poverty as investing in non-agricultural sectors.<sup>xvi</sup> Studies have shown that public investment in agricultural research has resulted in large economic benefits with annual rates of return between 20 and 60 percent.<sup>xvii</sup>
- In 2016, the U.S. spent \$2.2 billion on international food security programs that served more than 47 million beneficiaries in 59 countries. These programs include food aid donations of U.S. agricultural commodities, school feeding programs, emergency relief, and long term economic and agricultural development.<sup>xviii</sup>

**For additional information please contact the Alliance to End Hunger at [info@alliancetoendhunger.org](mailto:info@alliancetoendhunger.org) or visit our website at [www.alliancetoendhunger.org](http://www.alliancetoendhunger.org)**

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<sup>i</sup> United Nations, “World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision” 2017.

[https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017\\_KeyFindings.pdf](https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_KeyFindings.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> IFPRI, “World Population Day 2017: IFPRI models impact of population growth on demand for food,” 2017.

<http://www.ifpri.org/blog/world-population-day-2017-ifpri-models-impact-population-growth-demand-food>

<sup>iii</sup> FAO, “International Symposium on the role of biotechnologies in sustainable food systems and nutrition,” 2016.

[www.fao.org/about/meetings/agribiotechsymposium/fags/en](http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/agribiotechsymposium/fags/en)

<sup>iv</sup> World Bank, “Poverty Overview,” 2018. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview#1>

<sup>v</sup> USAID, “USAID Key Accomplishments,” 2017. <https://www.usaid.gov/reports-and-data/key-accomplishments>

<sup>vi</sup> USDA, “New USDA Trade Initiative Aims to Expand Markets in Sub-Saharan Africa,” 2013.

<sup>vii</sup> USDA, “National and/or State Level Monthly and/or Annual Data,” 2018. [https://fns-](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/pd/34SNAPmonthly.pdf)

[prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/pd/34SNAPmonthly.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/pd/34SNAPmonthly.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> FRAC, “Rural Hunger in America: Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program,” 2018. [http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/rural-](http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/rural-hunger-in-america-snap-get-the-facts.pdf)

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<sup>ix</sup> CBPP, “SNAP Boosts Retailers and Local Economies,” 2018. [https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-boosts-retailers-](https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-boosts-retailers-and-local-economies#_ftn6)

[and-local-economies#\\_ftn6](https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-boosts-retailers-and-local-economies#_ftn6)

<sup>x</sup> USDA ERS, “The Food Assistance National Input-Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP,” 2010.

<sup>xi</sup> USAID, “Agriculture and Food Security,” 2018. <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/agriculture-and-food-security>

<sup>xii</sup> United Nations, “World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision,” 2017.

[https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017\\_KeyFindings.pdf](https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_KeyFindings.pdf)

<sup>xiii</sup> Center for Global Development, “American Agriculture’s Long Reach: Why the Farm Bill Matters for Development,” 2017.

<https://www.cgdev.org/publication/american-agriculture-long-reach-why-farm-bill-matters-development>

<sup>xiv</sup> FAO, “The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World,” 2018. <http://www.fao.org/3/I9553EN/i9553en.pdf>

<sup>xv</sup> FAO, “THE LINKAGES BETWEEN MIGRATION, AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT,” 2018.

<http://www.fao.org/3/CA0922EN/ca0922en.pdf>

<sup>xvi</sup> Christiaensen, Luc, Demery, Lionel, and Jesper Kuhl, “The (evolving) role of agriculture in poverty reduction—An empirical perspective,” 2011. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304387810001252>

<sup>xvii</sup> USDA, “Economic Returns to Public Agricultural Research,” 2007.

[https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/42826/11496\\_eb10\\_1.pdf?v=0](https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/42826/11496_eb10_1.pdf?v=0)



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<sup>xviii</sup> USAID, "U.S. International Food Assistance Report," 2016. [https://www.fas.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2018-09/final\\_usaid\\_usda\\_fy16\\_u.s.\\_international\\_food\\_assistance\\_report.pdf](https://www.fas.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2018-09/final_usaid_usda_fy16_u.s._international_food_assistance_report.pdf)