



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/secretary%E2%80%99s-column-family-farmers-do-more-feed-world>

Secretary's Column: Family Farmers Do More Than Feed the World

Earlier today, Secretary Vilsack posted a guest column on the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations blog](#) in honor of World Food Day. The UN General Assembly has designated 2014 "International Year of Family Farming." This is a strong signal that the international community recognizes the important contribution of family farmers to world food security.

The headlines today can often seem bleak: worries of terrorism, global health, climate change, drought and hunger dominate the news cycle. These are extraordinarily complex and challenging issues that will impact and forever transform the lives of future generations.

Solving them is not simply about military or economic might. While they are not always fully appreciated and recognized for their capacity to address these challenges, I believe the role that agriculture and family farmers can play is significant.

At its simplest: addressing the core challenges of feeding the world and coping with climate change has implications that reach far beyond the borders of the United States. For many countries, a thriving agricultural economy is an important stepping stone out of conflict and into greater security.

We have a global responsibility to work together, share information and lift each other up as we resolve these challenges. Contrary to what you may hear from some in Washington, climate change is a problem and we must take action. We have already begun an earnest global discussion about what agriculture can do to lessen its impact. Last month, the United States, along with several of its country partners at the United Nations, signed on to a Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture—a coordinated, focused, and global effort on climate. The Alliance will help us to better integrate and coordinate research, so that we as a world community can do a better job of understanding and appreciating what it will take to improve agricultural resiliency and productivity.

It will also take substantial increases in agricultural innovation and the productivity of family farmers—but they can't do it alone. We must agree to band as a global, united front, to be able to adequately feed the world in the future. Today, 805 million people are already food insecure. We can and we must do more to build a better future for those people and for future generations.

Some have estimated it will take as much innovation in agriculture in the next 40 years as in the preceding 10,000 years to be able to feed a growing population. For that, we'll need expanded agricultural research, which has implications on human health as well. Access to higher quality foods, more nutritious foods, foods that will grow in drought or flood conditions is critically important to meeting nutrition needs—in terms of having both the right foods and enough of them, in the right places—and, as a consequence, improving global health outcomes.

To address these challenges, we have U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers at work in locations across the country to develop new ideas and test innovations. Equally critical is that we aren't keeping these revelations to ourselves—we're making the data and information available to scientists all over the world in the hopes that they'll be able to use the information to expand our understanding and increase our efficiency.

Creating a more food secure world, a healthier world, with greater security for all is not a panacea. While it may not solve every problem that dominates the headlines today, what it will do is create hope, security and new opportunity for many people around the world.

This post originally [appeared](#) on the U.S. Department of Agriculture blog.

More from World Food Day 2014:

- [10 Reasons We're Sweet on Sweet Potatoes and Why You Should Be Too!](#)
- [Secretary Kerry's Statement on World Food Day 2014](#)
- [Peace Corps Volunteers Worldwide Work to Eradicate Hunger and Increase Food Security](#)
- [On World Food Day, a Story of Restoring Potato Crops to Tanzania](#)