

Food Security Makes Headlines Around the World

The significant volume of media coverage suggests we have reached a tipping point.

Food security is an issue now.



Undernutrition. The obesity epidemic in the U.S. highlights the challenge of “food deserts” in many major cities as well as rural areas. In a food desert, wholesome, nutritious food isn’t available as readily as cheap, unhealthy calories.¹⁰ Making better calories more affordable is essential to shifting the obesity trend.

Changing Practices. Fewer farmers are switching to organic production, with some even reverting to more innovative production.¹¹ “You have seen a slowdown in the transition of acres,” said George Siemon, chief executive of Organic Valley, the largest U.S. organic cooperative.

Power of Protein. The school lunch program guidelines limiting protein in meals at U.S. schools were reversed in December 2013 after participation dropped because kids weren’t getting enough protein to fuel their bodies.¹²

Skyrocketing Prices. Egg prices in the EU skyrocketed in January 2012, when a ban on conventional chicken cages pushed many egg producers out of business – egg prices in the U.K. quadrupled almost overnight.^{13, 14}

Food Shortages. In 2013, Dutch consumers protested a baby formula shortage sparked by local hoarding and illegal trade to meet exploding Chinese demand.¹⁵

Production Disruptions.

Avian influenza swept Mexico’s egg industry in 2012, wiping out 1 in 6 birds, doubling egg prices and sparking a national crisis.²²

Continued Deforestation.

While slowing, deforestation to meet food needs is a significant concern for long-term climate change impact on food production.²¹

Toppling Governments. The lack of affordable bread in Egypt has driven enough discontent to topple multiple regimes in the country.²⁰

Food Crisis Looms.

According to the World Food Programme, 1 in 4 people living in rural areas in Zimbabwe are expected to need food assistance in early 2014, the highest since 2009.¹⁹

Food Security = Global Stability.

High food prices are an ongoing threat to civil order, warn analysts at the New England Complex Systems Institute, who studied the link between food riots and the Arab Spring.² As demand climbs, so will prices and volatility.

Reverse Trade. Instead of simply exporting food from an area of production to an area of need, growing global economies in Asia and Latin America are buying in to markets to protect their long-term food security, from land purchases in Africa to the purchase of the largest U.S. pork producer by a Chinese company.^{17, 18}

Civil Unrest. Riots broke out in 30 countries to protest high food prices in 2008, and again in 2011.¹⁶

