

Lutheran Peace Fellowship – Advocacy Alert – September 2012

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Dear friend of peacemaking,

Have you felt in recent weeks that the drought devastating the U.S. breadbasket might be a wake-up call? I have. I've also felt that there is a growing **common ground** among those working for change in policies regarding climate change, world hunger, agriculture, and international peacemaking.

Let me explain. Thanks to our government's agricultural policies which reward large scale industrial farms, the U.S. is by far the world leader in corn production and **currently dominates global markets**. When the price of corn rises in the US as it did five years ago, the result is a global spike in food prices. And that **ripple effect** caused food demonstrations to break out throughout the world.

As someone living in the global South – Bolivia specifically – who's worked on these issues for years, I witnessed first-hand the resulting violence and political instability. This year's widespread failure of the U.S. corn crop **threatens to drive world food prices even higher**, which disproportionately impacts the poor because most of their paycheck goes toward buying food.

One key problem is that U.S. government policies have pushed farmers to give up planting a diversity of crops in favor of a risky focus on just corn and soy. And compared to many other crops, corn is particularly **vulnerable to drought**. When most of the world's corn is grown in one place, it makes the entire world food system more precarious.

These issues are **coming to a head in the next few weeks** as Congress approaches the deadline for acting on the pending farm bill which in the House continues to encourage Midwest farmers to narrowly concentrate on just corn and soy. It is also proposing **drastic cuts** to both international hunger programs, and to food stamps (now called SNAP) and other domestic programs.

In its current form, this bill is truly a **recipe for instability and unrest** both at home and abroad.

The farm bill needs to encourage a greater **diversity of crops** and shift more support to organic and agroecological farming systems that both grow more food, and are **much more resilient and sustainable**. In the face of an unstable climate, we need to **diversify our portfolio** and stop putting all our eggs in one very vulnerable basket. The farm bill should also be more responsive to the needs of those most at risk of hunger by **strengthening – not reducing – funding for hunger programs**.

Please use the links below to become better informed about what is at stake and [write to your Representative through the ELCA's e-Advocacy Network by clicking here](#).

Blessings and Peace,

Alan Forsberg, LPF board chair

The Silver Lining in the Drought

By WILLIAM G. MOSELEY – St. Paul, Minnesota

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/08/opinion/the-droughts-alert-for-corn.html?_r=1&ref=opinion

Here is a podcast of a radio interview with the author of the above article - scroll down to 8-12 - News and Views - 1 PM August 12, 2012, his part starts around 21 minutes in and goes for 10 minutes.

<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/audio/1091-news-and-views-with-susie-jones/>

It's Bad News: The 2012 House Farm Bill

EWG's VP of Government Relations, Scott Faber, explains why the 2012 House Farm Bill is the "worst piece of farm and food legislation in decades."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tS1jQDvqUc>

Food policy could go backward under Farm Bill

Green Acre Radio: As the nation suffers a serious drought, Congress is working on a farm bill that turns away from the underlying issues of sustainability and good health. Listen to the first half of this two-part audio version of this story, which was originally presented on KCBS radio. And the second segment.

<http://www.foodfirst.org/en/Farm+Bill+2012+taking+food+policy+backward>

We Need a New Farm Bill Now

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eva-m-clayton/we-need-a-new-farm-bill-n_b_1862057.html

Our Food, Our bill

<http://www.foodfirst.org/en/2012+Farm+Bill>

Rapidly rising grain commodity prices could result in another round of food riots

<http://www.foodfirst.org/en/commodity+speculation+2012>

View this Financial Times short video which explains what might be in store for food prices. Read this Reuters report published on July 12, 2012 titled "Analysis: Food crisis looms as importers sit out grain price highs."

High and Dry: Why Genetic Engineering Is Not Solving Agriculture's Drought Problem in a Thirsty World (2012)

http://www.ucsus.org/food_and_agriculture/science_and_impacts/science/high-and-dry.html

Focus on the Right Kind of Organic Farming

New York Times Opinion, September 10, 2012

By Raj Patel

<http://www.foodfirst.org/en/Organic+farming+as+necessity>

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/09/10/is-organic-food-worth-the-expense/focus-on-the-right-kind-of-organic-farming>

Sustainable Farming Can Feed the World?

By [MARK BITTMAN](#)

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/sustainable-farming/>

The US Drought and Global Hunger: What We Know and What We Don't

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-holt-gimenez/the-us-drought-and-global_b_1777442.html

Impact of the US Drought on Food Prices - A KPFK radio interview with Food First Executive Director Eric Holt-Giménez

On July 19, 2012 Ian Masters of KPFK interviewed Eric Holt-Giménez on the global impact of commodity price speculation on the ability of poor people to purchase food for themselves and their families. [Listen now.](#)

US politicians must regulate finance to tackle the drought and food-price crisis

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jul/24/us-politicians-regulate-finance-drought-food>

<http://www.foodfirst.org/en/regulate+finance>

Related Videos:

Interview with Vandana Shiva

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_M3sbR08Y0

This is the raw footage of an interview for alternative radio, and she goes into a lot of other issues, but largely talks about the problems with large scale industrial agriculture.

Raj Patel - The Real Price of Food

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21b8kRKcgV4&feature=player_detailpage

Global Food Sovereignty

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MH5kSGPs4GU>

Food Sovereignty and the new Face of Global Agriculture

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R0Uy15HUfl>