

Food Emergency News

FAO Head Says: Double Food Production

To feed the 9 billion or so people who will be alive by the year 2050, it is necessary to double world food production, by applying technology and building infrastructure, UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Director General Jacques Diouf declared May 7.

Speaking from Haiti, one of the more than 40 nations where food riots have occurred in recent months, Diouf argued that doubling world food production would not only satisfy those human beings who are to come, but the 862 million hungry people alive today.

The world will face the problem that there is not enough food available, and even countries which have money, will not be able to buy food, because it will not be there to buy, he said. Today's food scarcity does not come from a lack of land or water, but rather from the lack of investment in infrastructure and technology, and in many cases, a lack of storage facilities.

Although failing to identify globalization as the genocide that it is, Diouf pointed to international conditions as another cause of scarcity, calling for a "market which is equitable." If subsidies are given, they must be given to all, he said.

Five Asian Nations Aim To Set Up Rice Cartel

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said May 5 that a proposed OPEC-style rice cartel in Southeast Asia would ensure global food security, and not increase hunger and poverty by raising prices, as critics have charged. Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej said the previous week that his country had agreed in principle to form the rice cartel with Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, as costs rise and supplies of rice diminish.

"We will not only ensure food security in each of our own countries, but will help

solve the entire problem of shortages across the region and the world," Hun Sen said. "When there are shortages, we will not stockpile the rice or increase prices," he added. "We really want to help ensure food security."

The five proposed members of the cartel will discuss the organization at regional talks in October, Hun Sen said, adding that the Mekong River nations would export up to 15 million tons of rice a year.

Many voices internationally have spoken out against the proposal, including the British financial press, the Asian Development Bank, and rice importers in the Philippines and elsewhere, claiming that "greed-based price-fixing" will take over the rice market—showing that either they are lying, or they lack knowledge of the fact that the prices set by the "free market" are in fact set by the commodities speculators, driven by greed and outright murderous intent.

Don't Believe the Lies: Indians Are Eating Less

Indian leaders from all sides are attacking U.S. President George Bush's and German Chancellor Angela Merkel's outrageous statement blaming India and China for rising food prices, Voice of America reported May 6. Bush made the statement May 2 that the Indian and Chinese middle classes are driving up food prices. VOA quoted Indian physicist Vandana Shiva, who is now an environmentalist, saying that Indians are now eating less per capita than they did 15 years ago. Shiva said Bush made his remarks "to distract the American public. And, second, to continue the myth of globalization, to make it look like globalization is bringing benefits to countries like India, when it's not. . . . Per capita consumption of food [in India] has dropped from 177 kilograms per capita per year to 152 in the last decade and a half. Instead of Mr. Bush citing that 350 million middle class [who are well-fed], he should be citing the Indian children being denied. One million a year

are dying for lack of food."

The VOA also reported that the Confederation of Indian Industry, representing 7,000 business entities, is setting up a task force to look into rising food costs. The CII says that biofuels, increasing drought, and "land set aside" subsidies are sending prices up.

Indian Defense Minister A.K. Antony called Bush's comment "a cruel joke" because U.S. biofuel policies are responsible for higher food prices. And BJP vice president M.A. Nagvi said that Bush is shifting from his earlier role of global "bomb inspector" to world "bread inspector."

Grain Cartels' Profits Increase More Than 1,000%

The global food crisis is surely making the grain cartel happy. In an interview with *Marketplace*, a financial magazine, analysts pointed out that Bunge, a leading soybean processor operating in 30 countries, has increased its net earnings by 1,964%!

Cargill, the behemoth that buys, stores, and sells grain, and transports and processes it, made over \$1 billion last quarter, raising its profit by 86% over a year ago. Mosaic, a fertilizer giant, partly owned by Cargill, took in almost 12 times what it did a year ago—a 1,200% increase.

Also, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), another grain and oilseed giant, and one of the biggest U.S. ethanol producers, did exceedingly well, raising its profits 42% last quarter. ADM, among others, has collected billions in biofuel subsidies.

Such profits are not surprising when one finds that there are only five agribusiness giants that dominate the world seed market. Fertilizers? Four companies control the vast majority of sales. Soybean crushing? Ditto. Flour milling? Just three.

Marketplace pointed out that these giants reveal little about their operations. Cargill, for example, is privately held, and told *Marketplace*, it doesn't "elaborate on its activities." ADM and Bunge didn't respond to interview requests from *Marketplace*.