



The Future of Food



The world produces more than enough food to satisfy the dietary needs of the entire global population, according to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Yet about **800 million people, or almost 11% of the world's population, go hungry due to economic and distribution issues.** This problem could get worse as the population continues to balloon. An FAO report has outlined the agricultural challenges ahead; they include the following:

Effects of global climate change—Higher temperatures, erratic rainfall, and more frequent heat waves, droughts, floods, tropical storms, and wildfires will hurt the world's ability to produce food.

Pests and disease—Outbreaks of animal diseases and plant pests have increased in recent years. They jeopardize livestock and crops, and travel easily across borders.

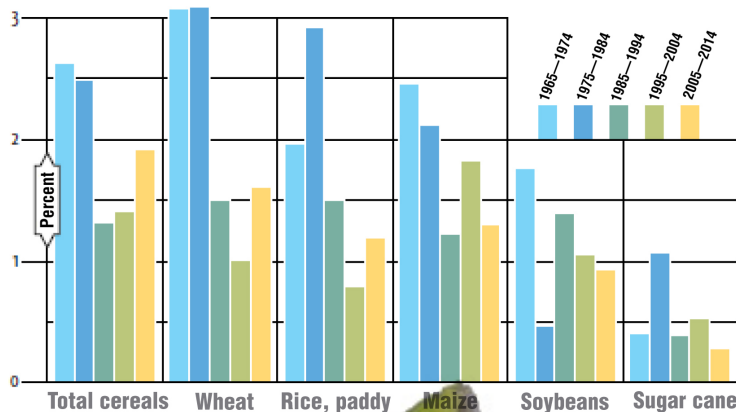
Strains on agricultural production—The agricultural industry in 2050 will need to produce almost 50 % more food, feed, and biofuel than it did in 2012.

The threat of war—Every famine in the modern era has involved some sort of conflict. In recent years, many of these wars have been sparked by climate-related natural disasters that have an impact on food security.

The average growth in crop yields has dropped since the 1960s for many types of crops, including maize (corn), wheat and rice.

Source: FAO

Average annual growth rates for selected crop yields



Source: © FAO, 2017. The future of food and agriculture – Trends and challenges. Rome.

So what can be done? The FAO suggests that it will take rapid technological development, wise public policies, innovation, and poverty reduction to help us meet future food needs while minimizing harm to the planet.

—Doug Dollemore

