II. What is the Food Problem?

Current Situation

FAO, "Food: A Fundamental Human Right"
1. What international agreements have identified access to adequate food as both an individual right and a collective responsibility?

2. What obligations does the right to right to be free from hunger and the right to adequate food place on government?

Myers, “Hunger in the World: Costs and Benefits of Remedies”
1. What is food insecurity about and what are 4 ways that food insecurity affects people’s lives?

2. How many people in developing countries are undernourished and which regions of the world have made the greatest and least progress in reducing malnutrition during the 1990s?

3. According to Myers, in a world with plentiful food supplies, why is the world hunger situation so dismal and what are 4 priorities areas in his business plan to fight hunger in developing countries?

FAO, "Crop Prospects and Food Situation–Food Emergencies Update No. 3, July 2009"
1. Which region of the world is currently facing the most food emergencies, requiring external assistance?

2. What are the main political, economic, social, and weather/natural disaster-related causes of the current food emergence?

FAO, “1.02 Billion People Hungry”
1. Why is the number of hungry people expected to grow overall by 11% in 2009 and in what region of the world do most of the world’s undernourished live?
2. Why will the urban poor probably face the most severe problems in coping with the global recession? About what percent of their income do poor consumers spend on staple food?

**Montero, “Financial Crisis May Worsen Food Crunch It Eclipsed”**

1. While commodity/food prices have fallen by as much as 50% since record highs in June (2008), the financial crisis is expected to make the global food crisis worse. What are 3 reasons why the financial crisis could worsen the food crisis?

2. What a 3 ways that governments, lending agencies, and donors have responded to the food crisis to invigorate agricultural investments, ease inflation, and provide food to the most vulnerable?

**Rice-Oxley, “Briefing—Lessons from Past Food Crises”**

1. How does the current food crisis compare (to past food crises)—what are 2 similarities and what are 2 new drivers?

2. According to Lester Brown, how is the effect of the current food crisis different from the 1970s food crisis?

3. Regarding lessons learned from the resolution to previous (food) crises, what institutional response have been helpful and what institutional responses have not been helpful?

4. Some are skeptical that the food crisis will be buried under bumper grain harvests. According to Brown, Prof. Grant, and Ms. Bart, what are 4 things that need to be done?

**Causes of Hunger, Famine & Food Security**

**Velasquez-Manoff, “India’s Vanishing Groundwater”**

1. According to two new studies, what is responsible for the rapid depletion of India’s aquifers?

2. Why did India’s water withdrawals increase dramatically in the second half of the 20th century?
**Montero, “Roots of Asia’s Rice Crisis”**
1. Why can’t the Philippines and other countries in Asia produce enough rice to feed themselves? Identify 5 reasons. Some of the reasons may only apply to the Philippines, while others may apply to Asia in general.

2. While analysts warn that solutions (to the Asian rice crisis) will not be immediate, what forms could they take (3 examples)?

3. According to Minot, in the long run what do developing countries and the international community need to do?

**Sullivan, “Food Crisis Is Depicted As 'Silent Tsunami’”**
1. What is the new face of hunger (referred to as a silent tsunami) and what is the cause of this new problem?

2. According to Ms. Sheeran, what have soaring (food) prices meant for the WFP (UN’s World Food Program)?

**Baldauf, “In Zimbabwe, Bread Costs Z$10 Million”**
1. According to Western economists and Mugabe’s supporters, why has Zimbabwe descended from Southern Africa’s breadbasket?

2. In Zimbabwe’s regional capital of Bulawayo, food is on the shelves and department stores are full of clothes, but there are no customers. Why?

**Ford, “Drought Threatens China”**
1. What is the crisis facing northern China? According to officials, what weather-related and what human factors are to blame for the farmers’ difficulties?

2. According to Zhao Linjiang, how has China’s economic crisis (storm clouds gathering over China) contributed to the plight of people in Lui’s village?

**Ford, “North Korea to Become the World’s Largest Recipient of UN Food Aid”**
1. What factors (3 items) did Tom Banbury (World Food Program) blame for the 20% shortfall in food supplies in North Korea?
2. According to Tom Banbury (World Food Program), what signs indicate that North Korea’s policy of “self-relience” isn’t working in agriculture?

Benequista, “As Famine Looms in Ethiopia, Only the Neediest Get Food Aid”
1. How many people in Ethiopia are in need of emergency food aid and why are aid workers and government officials (in Ethiopia) forced to “prioritize” aid?

McLaughlin, “In Africa, When it Rains, it Swarms”
1. What may cause more destruction (in West Africa) than any current African conflicts and what spawned this plague—the worst since the 1980s?

2. What’s the tragedy about the plague?

Itano, “AIDS Adds to the African Food Crisis”
1. Why is AIDS not just a health crisis?

2. What do families do to deal with the extreme pressure on household resources, as a result of AIDS?

3. How has AIDS changed marriage customs in central Malawi?

Success Stories
Haines, “Massive Flooding Returns, but Mozambique to Mozambique Prevents Disaster”
1. Despite massive flooding, why did Mozambique not face a massive humanitarian disaster like the one that occurred six years ago?

2. Over the past year, how has the Mozambican government revamped (the focus of) its disaster management agency?

Ross, “Brazil Makes Headway in “Zero Hunger“”
1. What has President Lula done in an effort to stamp out hunger in Brazil and how is the program funded?

2. According to Mr. Grazino, what does “Zero Hunger” do that has never been done before in Latin America?
Tergat, “How a Simple Meal Helped the World's Top Marathoner”
1. Worldwide: a) how many people lose their lives every day because they can’t get enough to eat; b) how many hungry people were there last year, despite frequent & loud commitments by world leaders to cut in half the number of hungry people by 2015; and c) how many children run the risk of seeing their lives either cut short/ruined because of malnutrition?

2. Since his days as a (WFP) beneficiary, what has Tergat learned (4 examples) about what school feeding programs can do?

Controversies and Future Concerns
Downie, “Brazil Defends Ethanol in Food-versus-Fuel Fight”
1. According to Brazil’s President Lula da Silva, many biofuel experts, and Brazilian officials, why is the bad publicity (regarding ethanol production in Brazil) unwarranted and uninformed?

Cobbin, “Time to End Cotton Subsidies”
1. What ruling did the WTO’s appeal panel recently make and what does the ruling require the US to do?

2. Why did a church-based social activist in Mozambique exclaim, “Is there really one law for the rich and one law for the poor?”

3. In 2004, how much aid did the US give to Sub-Saharan Africa’s 540 million residents, compared to the total support that it gave to its 7,500 cotton farmers?

Dickson, “No Quick Fix to Africa's Food Problem”
1. According to the IAC report, what are 4 factors that combine to make alleviating food shortages in Africa more complex than it was to alleviate hunger in Asia?

2. The IAC report emphasizes that creating a situation in which the continent (i.e., Africa) is able to provide enough food for its population will require actions at many levels. What are 3 actions/things that need to be done?

Baldauf, “Africans are Already Facing Climate Change”
1. According to a new UN report, what are 3 ways that global warming is predicted to impact Africa by 2080?
2. According to Jason Sterns, an analyst with the International Crisis Group, what factors are tightly linked to many of Africa's conflicts—such as in Burundi and the horn of Africa?

3. According to Claudia Ringer of the International Food Policy Institute, why is Africa more vulnerable to climate change?

Francis, “Can the Earth Provide Enough Food for 9 Billion People?”
1. Why does the author argue that “the world is an odd place”?

2. What does Mr. Rosegrant hope will keep (food) shortages down in some of the poorest nations?

Grier, “Is the US Doing Enough to Alleviate the World Food Crisis?”
1. What has President Bush proposed to help the world deal with spreading hunger?

2. What major change has the Bush administration proposed to Congress in how US food aid is delivered?

Rogers, “Ortega Leads Anti-US Critique at Latin American Food Summit”
1. The recent meeting of the Latin American Food Summit—sponsored by the leftist trade block, ALBA—morphed into a series of complaints of US policies. What were the complaints leveled by President Ortega (Nicaragua), President Zelaya (Honduras), Prime Minister Gonsalves (St. Vincent and the Grenadines), and President Arias (Costa Rica)?