Social and Gender Dimensions of the Biofuels and Food Debates

Gale Summerfield
Women and Gender in Global Perspectives Program (WGGP)
Human and Community Development (HCD)
Agricultural and Consumer Economics (ACE)
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Regional Contexts and Global Issues

- Brazil
- US
- China
## ANNUAL WORLD ETHANOL PRODUCTION BY COUNTRY

(MILLIONS OF GALLONS, ALL ETHANOL GRADES)

Source: F.O. Licht


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>3,989</td>
<td>4,227</td>
<td>4,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>3,535</td>
<td>4,264</td>
<td>4,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>1,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World TOTAL</td>
<td>10,770</td>
<td>12,150</td>
<td>13,489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Social Dimensions

- Employment and working conditions
- Property Rights
- Intrahousehold decisions & allocation; control of income
- Net producers or consumers, links to food prices
- Technological change, sustainability & resiliency
Brazil

- Largest producer of ethanol for many years without increase in world grain/food prices
- Mainly large farms, not driving people off small farms
- Regional differences, Sao Paulo now produces over 60% of ethanol
- Gendered work, mainly male; many migrants from NE
- Working conditions have been problematic; more mechanization now
## Sugarcane Workers
### Brazil, 2006

*Source: Moraes, 2008 from PNAD data 2006*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Workers #</th>
<th>Age Average years</th>
<th>Male Emp. share</th>
<th>Education Average years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil total</td>
<td>532,263</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-Northeast</td>
<td>263,291</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center-South</td>
<td>268,972</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Paulo</td>
<td>156,279</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brazil, cont.

- In 2008, Brazil had been gearing up for more global production opportunities
- Some small-scale production of biofuels from mamona/castor beans in NE for poor women and families
- Need to increase educational opportunities of cane workers and others to help with loss of jobs during mechanization.
U.S.

- Rapid increase in corn-based ethanol production in 2000s; exceeded Brazil by mid-2000s.
- Ethanol plants in US
  Jan 2008, 139 plants; by Oct. 2008, 177 plants; 2009 impact of recession
- Highly subsidized
Women not very visible in much of fossil fuel and biofuel process, but engaged at many levels
Examining small communities in Illinois using CCF
Social networks, entrepreneurship, social capital -- gender roles in building community capacity and resilience
Limited employment opportunities
Impacts of changing technologies and global linkages
Storing maize in fall -- China banned use of food grains for biofuel production in 2007
Biofuels in China

- Began program in early 2000s
- In 2004, compulsory use of 10% ethanol blended in gasoline (E10) in 5 provinces: Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Henan, and Anhui
- In 2006, expanded E10 program to 27 cities in Shandong, Jiangsu, Hebei, and Hubei
## China:
### Ethanol Production and Subsidies

Source: IISD, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Capacity</td>
<td>Million tonnes</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidies</td>
<td>Million RMB</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Million US$</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
China, cont.

- Could earn higher incomes as farmers
- Entrepreneurial activities
- Cheaper energy
- Possibly cleaner energy in homes

- Biodiversity
- Marginal land
- Price volatility
Global Gender Aspects and Regional Variations

• Improve understanding of links between food and biofuels
• Land, Property Rights, and Crops
• Net sellers or consumers?
• Impacts on control of income within family
• Changing technologies
Global Gender Policy Issues for Biofuels and Food

- Include gender in analysis of taxes and mandates
- Crises will come -- prepare early
- Social safety net emphasis
  - consider time constraints
  - Early childhood nutrition focus
- Clarify property rights
- Involve women at all levels of policy design and implementation