

**Food Sovereignty:**  
An Economically, Environmentally  
and Socially Sustainable Solution to  
the Food Crisis

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# Problems with the Current Global Agrifood System

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# Agrifood System Vulnerability

## Spring 2008 food price spikes led to riots/rebellions

Riots in Mexico, Italy, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Indonesia, Burkina Faso  
Yemen, Cameroon, and Haiti

2 day general strike in Burkina Faso; 20,000 textile workers strike in Bangladesh

Egyptian government sends troops to prevent a strike in textiles

## Present and Future

Prices fell again in late 2008 but still higher than 2004 (UNEP, Feb 2009)

110 million more people in poverty and 44 million more undernourished (UNEP)

Food prices expected to be 30-50% higher in coming decades and increasingly volatile (UNEP)

# Hunger, poverty, inequality & environmental damage

## Current Problem

3 billion poor people (1/2 world population) lives on less than \$2 a day

Many spend 60-80% of their income on food

923 hungry people in the world (FAO SOFI Report 2007)

80% of hungry are small farmers and farm laborers

91% of the planet's 1.5 billion hectares of agricultural land are increasingly being devoted to agroexport crops, biofuels and transgenic soybean to feed cars and cattle (Altieri, 2008)

Of 525 million farms worldwide, 404 million (77%) have less than 2 hta of land (IAASTD). Current trade and agriculture policy does not address their needs.

## The Future

Number of hungry expected to rise to 1.2 billion by 2025

25% of world food production may be lost due to climate change, invasive species, water scarcity and land degradation

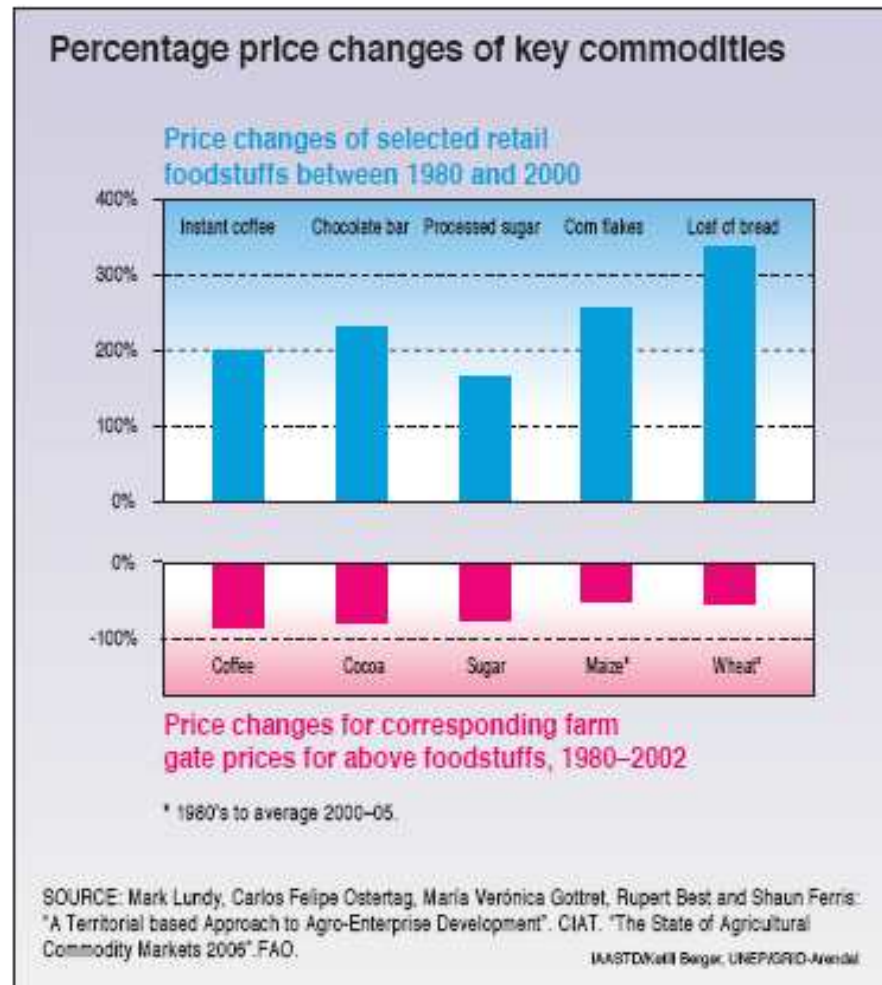
Displacement of small farmers will lead to rural outmigration and growth of slums

# Power in the Food Chain

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# Agribusiness Power Means Farmers get Less while Consumers Pay More



# Agribusiness Profits

Table 2. Profit Increase for Some of the World's Largest Grain Traders

<b>Company</b>	<b>Profits 2007 (US\$ million)</b>	<b>Increase from 2006 (%)</b>
Cargill (US)	2,340	36%
ADM (US)	2,200	67%
ConAgra (US)	764	30%
Bunge (US)	738	49%
Noble Group (Singapore)	258	92%

# Food Dependency and the Food Deficit

The trade and agriculture policies of the EU, US, World Bank and IMF policies have created a **North-South food trade deficit of \$11 billion**

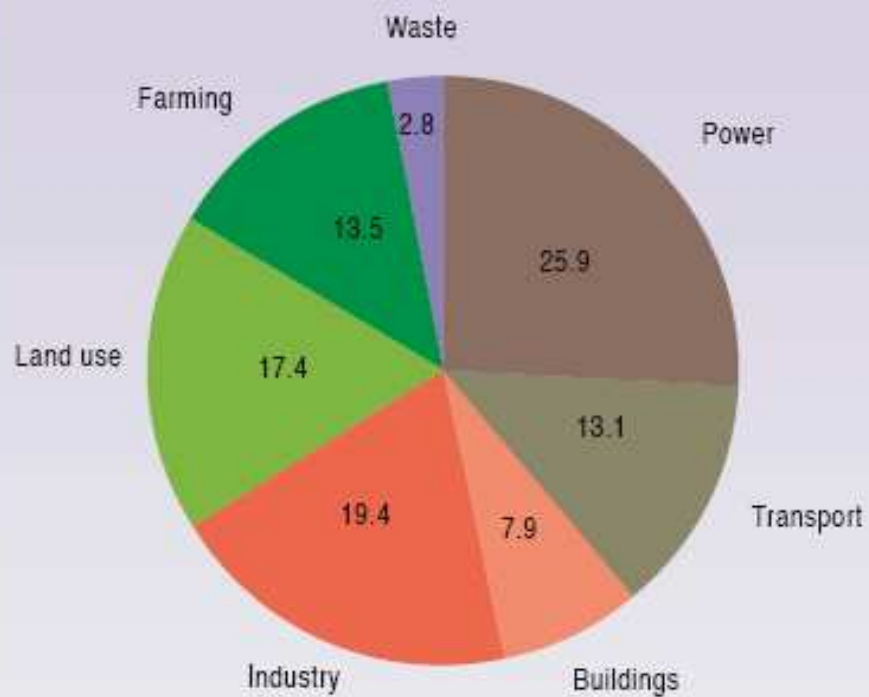
Expected to rise to \$50 billion by 2030

While many developing countries used to be self sufficient in food, **70% are now food dependent**





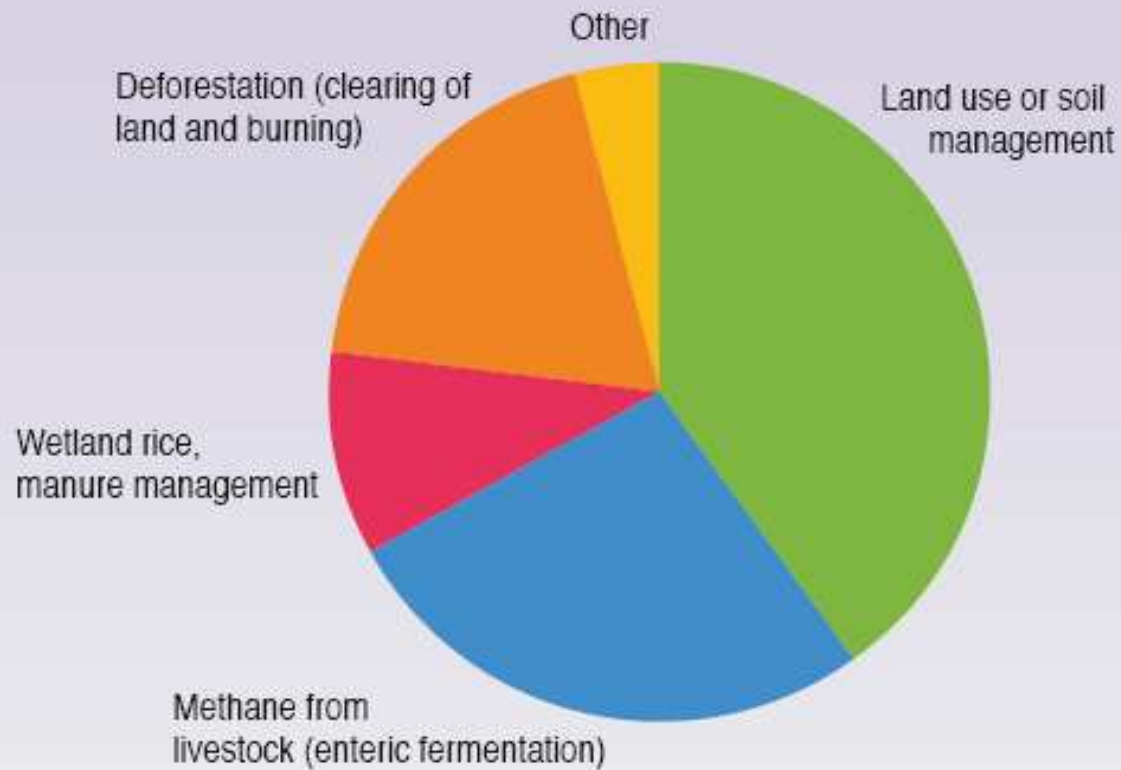
## Greenhouse gas emissions in 2004 by source



SOURCE: IPCC, Working group 1, 2007

IAASTD/Kelii Berger, UNEP/GRID-Arendal

## Greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and land use

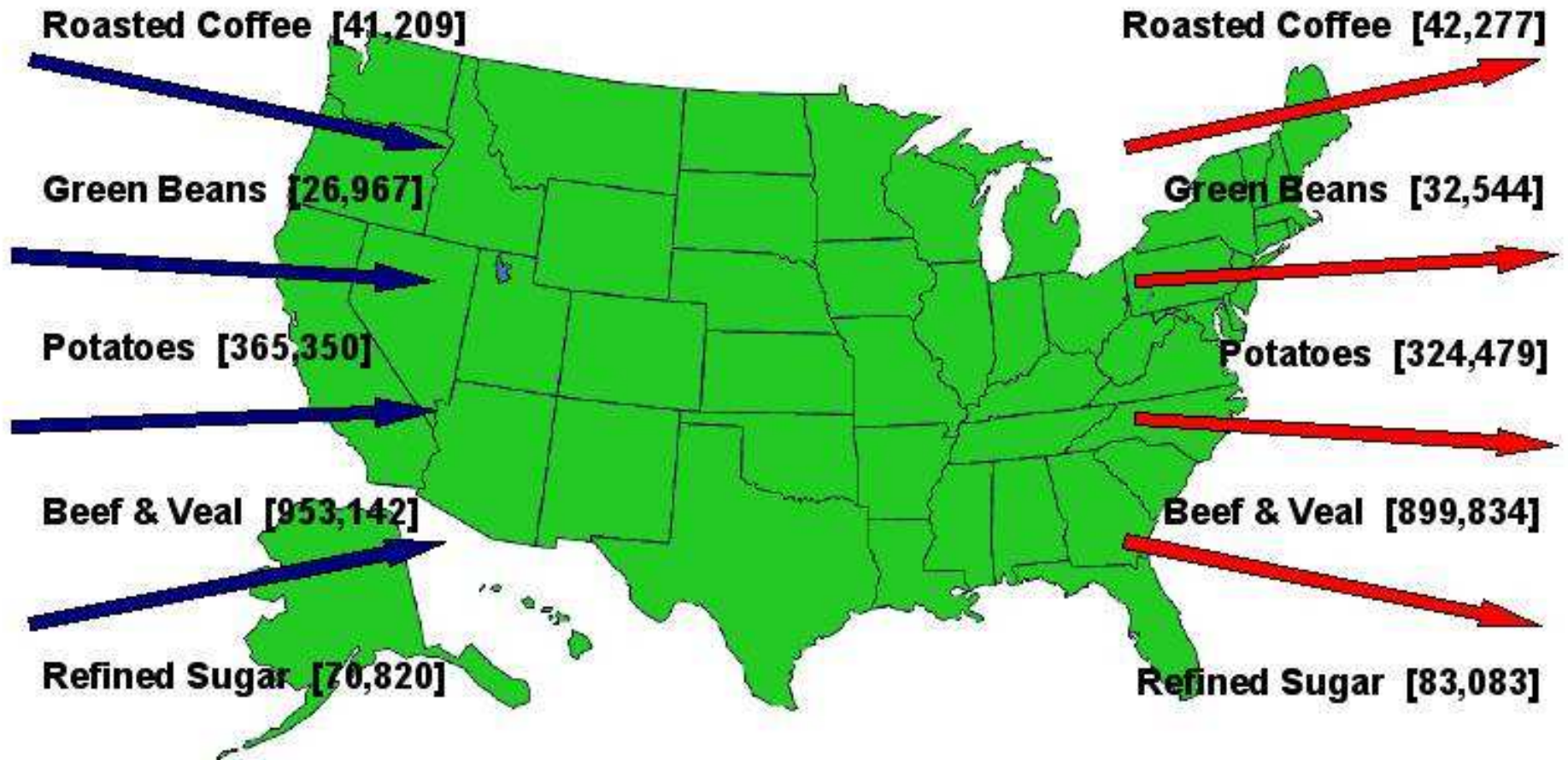


SOURCE: Baumert, 2005

IAASTD/Ketil Berger, UNEP/GRID-Arendal

## TONS IMPORTED

## TONS EXPORTED



# Solutions: Farmers Movements, Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Agriculture

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# Transnational Agrarian Movements (TAM)

Some examples

International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty  
- 500 rural movements and NGOs

La Via Campesina (LVC)

World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF)

World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP)

International Collective in Support of Fish Workers (ICSFW)

Differ from NGOs which aren't democratic organizations with a peasant base

**For more info see:** Saturnino M. Borras, Jr, Marc Edelman and Cristebal Kay, Transnational Agrarian Movements: Origins and Politics, Campaigns and Impact, *Journal of Agrarian Change*, April and July 2008.



- “An international movement of peasants, small- and medium-sized producers, landless, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers. We are an autonomous, pluralist and multicultural movement, independent of any political, economic, or other type of affiliation.”
- 149 organizations from 69 countries

# Some LVC Member Organizations

- Brazil-Landless workers movement (MST)
- Mexico-UNORC/Canada-National Farmers Union
- US-National Family Farm Coalition (George Naylor)
- France-Confederation Paysanne (Jose Bove)
- India-KRRS, BKU
- Ecuador-FENOCIN
- Guatemala-CONIC
- Korea- Korean Peasants League (KPL), KWPA
- Limited presence in Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and China

# Brazil ---MST



- 300,000 families living in communities on recovered land (asentamientos)
- Schools on agro-ecology
- Magazine
- Comprehensive proposals for land reform



# Focus of LVC Work

Use policy advocacy and direct action to

## Oppose

- WTO Agreement on Agriculture & Free Trade Agreements (FTA)s
- Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)
- Dumping/Unfair Subsidies (especially in the US and EU)

## Promote:

- Land Reform
- Food Sovereignty

## On consultative bodies of:

- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- The United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR)
- Working to pass a Peasants Convention at the UN

# What is Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty **prioritizes local and national economies and markets** and empowers **peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal - fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability**. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the **rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food**.

From Declaration of Nyeleni, February 2007

# Forum for Food Sovereignty, Mali

February 2007; [www.nyeleni2007.org](http://www.nyeleni2007.org)

## 500 representatives from more than 80 countries

- peasants/family farmers
- artisanal fisherfolk
- indigenous peoples
- landless peoples
- rural workers
- migrants
- pastoralists
- forest communities
- women
- youth
- consumers
- environmentalists
- urban movements

## Working Groups

- Local markets and international trade
- Local knowledge and technology
- Access and control over resources
- Sharing territories
- Conflicts, occupations and natural disasters
- Social conditions and forced migration
- Production models

## Impact of La Via Campesina and Other TAMs

- Developed the concept of “food sovereignty”
- Reframed the debate on “development” and the role of peasants
- Reframed the debate around the political economy of food \*\*
- Helped broaden debate on land reform beyond the market-led model
- Influence over agricultural policy and land reform processes in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nepal, Tuscany (Italy) and Mali
- Helped block agreement as part of WTOs Doha round

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# Sustainable Farming Methods

Method	Size	% of global acreage	Elements	Advantages	Limitations
Organic ag	31 million hta's	2%	Use of non synthetic fertilizers and pesticides	Reduced pollution and energy use; carbon sequestration; increased biodiversity; improved soil; better weather resiliency; more nutrient density; less toxics and pesticide residue	Barriers to entry for small farmers to get certified
Conservation ag	95 million hta's	5%	Low/no till Use of cover crops	Less wind and H2O erosion; more efficient water use; better conservation of soil organic matter	Increased vulnerability to pests
Agroforestry	1.2 billion people practice it		Growing trees which produce food, fuel, and income generating crops	Improves and protects soils and watersheds; enhances biodiversity; captures carbon	

Adapted from IAASTD Issue Brief: Towards Multifunctional Agriculture for Social, Environmental and Economic Sustainability

[http://www.agassessment-watch.org/docs/10505\\_Multi.pdf](http://www.agassessment-watch.org/docs/10505_Multi.pdf)

# New Green Revolution vs Food Sovereignty

	<b>New Green Revolution Model</b>	<b>Food Sovereignty Model</b>	<b>Advantage of Food Sovereignty</b>
<b>Seeds</b>	Use of GMO seeds	Seed saving;	No dependence on seed companies
<b>Fertilizer</b>	Commercial fertilizers	Organic fertilizers	No dependence on fertilizer companies; decreased fossil fuel usage
<b>Trade</b>	Open markets and free trade	Governments support national agriculture; some regional trade	Use of tariffs to prevent unfair competition/dumping
<b>Agricultural policy</b>	Support for agribusiness and larger farms	Support for small farmers	Strong rural economies and communities; less rural unemployment and outmigration

# Sustainable Agriculture And Productivity

Pretty et al, 2006

Looked at yield data from 286 farms from 57 countries.

Small farmers can increase yields by 79% by practicing environmentally sustainable techniques like organic agriculture and crop rotation

Badgley et al, 2007

Organic farming is 2 to 3 x more productive than conventional farming

Organic farming can feed the world without increasing the ag land base

UNEP, "Organic Agriculture and Food Security in Africa", 2008

Analysis of 114 farming projects in 24 African countries found that organic practices increased yields by more than 100%

International Assessment of Agricultural Science Technology, and Knowledge for Development panel (2007)

Intergovernmental process supported 400 experts, co-sponsored by the FAO, GEF, UNDP, UNDP, UNESCO, World Bank, WHO

Rejects industrial farming as a solution for food problems and supports small-scale farmers and organic and sustainable agriculture as a solution

# Food Sovereignty and Sustainability

## Economic sustainability

- rural development to prevent boom of mega-slums
- provide food and keep small producers on the land
- growth with equity

## Environmental sustainability

- organic or agricultural practices which
  - + decrease dependence on fossil fuels
  - + soil protection/ regeneration
  - + water conservation

## Social sustainability

- rebuild rural communities
- prevent forced migration
- reduce poverty and inequality which  
undermines social stability

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