

Protecting Harvests
Farming First side event
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Istanbul
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Your Excellencies and colleagues,

Achieving food security for all, means availability, accessibility and affordability of sufficient, nutritious food. This is no easy task in a world of growing population and requires the efforts by farmers, governments, researchers, businesses and other representatives of society.

Agriculture will need to produce more to serve basic nutritional needs. In order to achieve a global average food consumption of 3130 kcal per person per day for 9 billion people by 2050, an additional **1 billion tonnes of cereals** and **200 million tonnes of meat** would need to be produced annually.¹

The Farming First coalition believes that agricultural productivity has to be improved and food production increased in a sustainable way to find short and long-term solutions to food security worldwide.

At the center of the solution are the millions of farmers around the world who produce the food we all eat. By providing farmers with the right tools, knowledge and techniques, food security can be realized in all countries.

Quite simply:

Food security is an immediate and future priority for all countries worldwide

Food security is a complex issue requiring concerted efforts over the long term. International, regional and national policies need to be coordinated and implemented in consultation with farmers.

Governments should invest in their agricultural sectors. Investment should be made in developing countries' agriculture, especially LDCs.

¹ Bruinsma, 2009. Based on comparisons to 2005-07 levels.

Local production should be stimulated by providing farmers with the technology, the knowledge, the market information and the adequate financial services they need.

Women farmers should become specially targeted recipients because of their vital roles in the agricultural workforce, household food procurement and preparation, and family unit support.

Productivity levels in most developing countries have to be raised as much as possible to ensure food sufficiency. Near term efforts must be feeding our people.

Of course, one of the primary ways to meet needs is to reduce production losses and food waste. We need to use more of what we grow.

Last year, FAO estimated that post-harvest losses ranged from 15% to a whopping 50% in developing countries.

Waste is worst in fresh produce which delivers vital nutrients to humans around the globe. Losses in both the developed and developing world are estimated at over 30%.

We recommend the immediate need at the farm level for:

- Building local storage facilities and transportation mechanisms, including cold chain storage for food preservation. (We are pleased to note that the draft Plan of Action includes specific mention of storage needs.)
- Rural infrastructure including roads, links to railways, and to ports.

- Localising the application of agronomic knowledge, pest-identification and meteorological information.
- Educating the public on sustainable consumption and production needs and behaviours, including on the need to reduce food waste.
- Providing risk management tools to support farmers in managing weather and market variations.

But, as OECD points out, the problem of food waste is not limited to developing countries. One study suggests that 40-50% of food that is ready for harvest in some developed countries not consumed, and that households waste can range from 14 -28% of their food purchases.

Action is required throughout the food chain, including at the consumer level, to reduce food waste. Proper storage, market signals, transportation, and processing are needed – ironically often in the countries where food can least afford to be wasted. So, too, we need to educate consumers and end users. For once food moves to cities, vast percentages of it go to waste there.

All these losses lead to other forms of waste. One estimate puts the energy embodied in wasted food in the United States as equivalent to 2% to total energy consumption – roughly the same percentage as agriculture consumes to grow food in the first place.

Agricultural waste needs to be reduced, and waste that does occur needs to be used more constructively. Re-use of spoiled food in rural areas as feed and compost, and as green energy in urban areas, will help to minimize the impact of losses.

However, the best way to improve agriculture's output is to tackle the question of post harvest losses head on.