Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAO Liaison Office Newsletter
February 2019, Issue #14

NOW from NORTH AMERICA

10 February is the inaugural World Pulses Day.

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"It's time to accelerate innovation in agriculture and to do so in a way that aspires to make a difference to hundreds of millions of people who produce the bulk of the world's food on family farms"

José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO

11th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA), Berlin, 19 January 2019

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

I am sure all of you have had a good start to the New Year.

In January, FAO North America and the World Food Law Institute (WFLI) co-hosted a roundtable on Geographical Indications (GIs) for food, with a special focus on stakeholder relationships along value chains. The event was attended by experts and representatives of the diplomatic community in Washington DC and underlined GIs as an innovative tool to link smallholders with sustainable value chains.

We also co-hosted a technical briefing in Ottawa on the main findings of the 2018 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The well received event discussed the impacts of climate and conflict, and the role of gender equity to reverse the worrisome trend of rising hunger.

In February, we are looking forward to discuss new developments for climate smart landscapes globally with EcoAgriculture Partners, and the power of storytelling in tackling food waste with Planet Forward at the George Washington University.

Watch out for our food security crossword section in our next edition.

Thank you for your continued interest in our work. As always, we appreciate your feedback.

Vimlendra Sharan
Director, FAO Liaison Office for North America

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

Canadian perspectives on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World

Vimlendra Sharan (FAO) and Dominique Charron (IDRC) in Ottawa.

29 January 2019, Ottawa, ON - FAO North America in partnership with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) co-organized a high-level technical discussion highlighting Canadian perspectives on the key findings of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report at the Royal Canadian Geographical Society in Ottawa. The event was very well-attended and well-received by a large audience of senior representatives from the Government of Canada, civil society, academia and research institutions, philanthropic foundations, multilateral organizations, and the private sector.

Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO's Liaison Office for North America delivered keynote remarks, in which he presented the key findings of the SOFI report. The event also featured high-level remarks from Ms. Dominique Charron, Vice President of Programs and Partnerships at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), followed by a roundtable discussion moderated by Mr. Santiago Alba Corral, Interim Director of Agriculture and Environment at IDRC, featuring:

- Tom Pesek, Senior Liaison Officer at FAO North America;
- Paul Hagerman, Director of Public Policy at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank;
- Virginie Levasseur, Director, Consulting Services and Innovation and the Society for International Development;
- Annie Wesley, Senior Program Specialist, Agriculture and Food Security at IDRC;
- Audia Barnett, Representative, IICA Delegation in Canada;
- Jean-Charles Le Vallee, Associate Director, Food Horizons Canada; and
- Sophia Huyer, Gender and Social Inclusion Research Leader at the CGIAR Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security Programme.

The event served as a forum for highlighting Canadian perspectives on the key themes addressed in the SOFI 2018, particularly the intersection of climate, conflict and agriculture. Participants also emphasized the critical importance of promoting gender equality, and the empowerment of women and youth. Numerous speakers called upon governments, international organizations and civil society to help mitigate these negative impacts, while empowering and building resilience among those affected by climate change and natural disasters. Read article online.

Geographical Indications and stakeholder relations along sustainable value chains

Florence Tartanac presenting new insights on Geographical Indications and stakeholder relationships along value chains.

24 January 2019, Washington, DC - FAO North America and the World Food Law Institute (WFLI) co-hosted a roundtable on Geographical Indications (GIs) for food, with a special focus on stakeholder relationships along value chains. Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO North America welcomed the participants, among them many representatives from the diplomatic community in Washington, DC.

Marsha Echols, Director of WFLI, emphasized that lots of attention in the U.S. is on trademarks, while more attention could be given to Geographical Indications as vehicles for rural development. The aim of the continued roundtable series on Geographical Indications is to introduce U.S. policy makers to GIs, which are increasingly recognized around the world for providing social, cultural, and economic benefits, while creating a strong link between food, agriculture and local development.

Florence Tartanac, Senior Officer of FAO's Nutrition and Food Systems Division, highlighted that FAO/EBRD research has shown that local producers benefit from GIs in multiple ways.

Kae Sekine, Assistant Professor, Aichi Gakuin University (Japan), presented the research she is completing at FAO about competition between stakeholders along the value chain. She emphasized that GIs can be an innovative tool to link smallholders with sustainable value chains, however conflicts over profit shares need to be addressed.

The roundtable ended with a discussion on the role of niche vs. mass markets for GIs, its impact on land prices, and the importance of stakeholder governance mechanisms along GI value chains. Read full article.

Stay tuned for our upcoming Geographical Indications activities:

- Breakfast Roundtable: Wednesday, March 6 (9:00-10:30 am)
- World Food Law Institute Symposium: Tuesday, May 21 (9:00 am-3:30 pm)
- Geographical Indications in Recent FTA's: A Legal and Policy Comparison: Thursday, June 13 (4:30 pm at ASIL)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

Join us for the World Pulses Day Twitter Chat

After FAO's successful 2016 International Year of Pulses Campaign, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to dedicate 10 February as an annual day for pulses. World Pulses Day aims to promote continued positive momentum surrounding these healthy, nutritious, protein-rich, nitrogen-fixing legumes.

In recognition of the inaugural World Pulses Day on February 10, FAO North America is hosting a Twitter Chat on Monday, February 11, 2019 from 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM (EST) to engage different stakeholders in a discussion about the benefits of pulses and to highlight initiatives underway to promote their increased consumption.

Host: @FAONorthAmerica | Hashtag: #PulsesChat, #WorldPulsesDay

World Food Day Poetry Contest - Honorable Mention

Hunger Game by Henry Crawford, Silver Spring, MD

Into the spaces made by
words I go when famished
admiring the two tall towers
that end in 'full' or the way
the 'y' in 'empty' is like a fork
of choices or the tectonic way
that 'ate' slams into 'p' and 'l'
to make a 'plate' or how
the stubborn 'n' in 'need'
can be undone with just a 'd'
to do the 'deed' as the sum
of 'something' can overcome
the no in 'nothing' or how
it is that just a bit of 'flour'
can go to work on 'nourish'
to make it 'flourish' or how
a single 'u' makes all sound
in 'you' and a double 'u'
can take an 'e' from 'feed'
to make a 'we' to leap across
an empty space to 'can'
the way two words together
can tell us: end hunger.

Judges' Comments - *The distance between rampant hunger and none, as this poem-near-riddle wisely points out, is really only the single letter difference between need and deed.*
Judges: Carla Christopher and Kim Baker

In 2018, FAO North America in partnership with Poetry X Hunger hosted the first of its kind World Food Day Poetry Contest. Learn more about the poetry contest.

Partner Corner:
Mississippi State University

In this section, FAO's Liaison Office for North America invites a different partner organization each month to comment on how the partnership has benefitted both organizations.

Mississippi State University's (MSU) Global Center for Aquatic Food Security aims to address current challenges facing fisheries and aquaculture, and to ensure a safe supply of seafood that meets the world's food security needs. MSU currently serves as the Management Entity of The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish. Funded by the USAID, the FIL aims to reduce poverty and improve nutrition, food security, and livelihoods in developing countries by supporting the sustainable development of aquaculture and fisheries. The FIL supports research and capacity-building activities targeting three areas: Advancing productivity, reducing and mitigating risks, and improving human outcomes.

Recognizing the benefits of collaboration on global aquatic food security, FAO and MSU formed a partnership in 2010 that has expanded over the years. FAO recognizes MSU as a Center for Knowledge for Aquatic Health and as a Science Partner for its Blue Growth Initiative, and in 2018 MSU was designated as a FAO Reference Center for Aquatic Biosecurity.

"MSU, and particularly its Global Center for Aquatic Food Security, looks forward to continuing our rewarding partnership with the FAO. Our accomplishments with FAO have significantly contributed to MSU's recent award as the management entity of the U.S. Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish." --- Dr. Mark Lawrence, Professor at the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine and Director of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish.

http://international.msstate.edu/research/GCAFS/index.php

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

What	When	Where	Register
New Developments for Climate Smart Landscapes Globally: Policy, Partnerships, and Finance	Thursday, 7 February 2019 from 8:30 –11:00 am (EST)	FAO North America 2121 K Street, Suite 800B, Washington, DC	Link
World Pulses Day Twitter Chat	Monday, 11 February 2019, 10– 11 am (EST)	Online	Link
Tackling Food Waste: How We Sustainably Produce, Sell, & Consume Food on a Growing, Changing Planet	Wednesday, 13 February 2019, 1:30 - 3 pm (EST)	Planet Forward, George Washington University	livestream

TAX CORNER

This section provides important updates from the tax unit located at the FAO Liaison Office for North America, which processes tax reimbursement requests by FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) staff members.

The Internal Revenue Service has opened the 2019 tax-filing season as of 28 January 2019; thus, they are accepting and processing federal tax returns for tax year 2018. This is a day earlier than the 2018 tax season; in spite of the recent government shutdown as well as significant changes to the Tax Code.

The filing deadline to submit/file 2018 tax returns is April 15 for most taxpayers based in the United States.
For those who live in MA, ME or DC, the deadlines are April 16 and April 17, respectively (per the Patriots' Day holiday and the Emancipation Day holiday).

For those living/working overseas, the deadline to file is June 17 (per the automatic two month extension). The IRS emphasizes that this 2 month extension applies to *filing* tax returns, not payment of income tax. Since there were major changes made by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the IRS encourages taxpayers to review Publication 5307, (entitled Tax Reform: Basics for Individuals and Families).

FAO Tax Unit procedures for processing 2018 tax reimbursements are the same as previous years. All colleagues who are eligible must do the following:

- Create or have an enabled FAO Tax Portal login.
- Create the 2018 tax reimbursement and upload ALL necessary documentation.
- Create a 2019 tax advance IF and ONLY IF assistance with 2019 estimate tax is desired – this is not mandatory and only fixed term or continuing staff members are eligible.

For more details, please email low-ustax-settlement@fao.org.

FAO GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

Conflict-driven hunger worsens—new report to Security Council

28 January 2019, New York - The situation in the eight places in the world with the highest number of people in need of emergency food support shows that the link between conflict and hunger remains all too persistent and deadly, according to a new report released by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP). The report was prepared for the UN Security Council which in May adopted a landmark resolution on preventing hunger in conflict zones. The situation in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Yemen worsened in the latter part of 2018 largely because of conflict, while Somalia, Syria and the Lake Chad Basin have seen some improvements in line with improved security. In total, around 56 million people are in need of urgent food and livelihood assistance across the eight conflict zones.

"This report clearly demonstrates the impact of armed violence on the lives and livelihoods of millions of men, women, boys and girls caught up in conflict," FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva states in the report foreword. "I would strongly encourage you to keep in mind that behind these seemingly dry statistics are real people experiencing rates of hunger that are simply unacceptable in the 21st century."

Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations is the fifth report produced by FAO and WFP for the UN Security Council since June 2016. Full Story.

Deep shift in food systems needed to ensure healthy diets

15 January 2019 Santiago de Chile - Hunger, obesity and other forms of malnutrition will continue to increase if there is no deep change in food systems, said FAO Director General José Graziano da Silva.

He took part in Congreso Futuro, the most important scientific dissemination event in Latin America, together with international experts dedicated to promoting healthy and sustainable food systems.

He said that the problem of hunger and overweight in the world is not the lack of food, but the lack of access to healthy and nutritious food for the entire population. "The paradox is that today we have almost the same number of hungry people as obese people and the latter figure is growing rapidly," he noted. Graziano da Silva called for rapid and decisive joint action with governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and research. "We all have a role to play to ensure food security," he said. Full Story.

In Africa, investing in rural development and agriculture will offer rural youth an alternative to migration

18 January 2019, Berlin - Investing in rural areas and agriculture is crucial to achieve prosperity in Africa and to guarantee the continent's young people an alternative to migration, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said.

"In Africa, we need to invest in rural development aimed at creating jobs and opportunities for young people to remain in rural areas" he said. "We need youth for modern agriculture."

He made the remarks at the high level EU-African Alliance in Agriculture event which is part of the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in Berlin. Full Story.

FAO chief emphasizes need for inclusive digital innovation

19 January 2019, Berlin - It's time to accelerate innovation in agriculture and to do so in a way that aspires to make a difference to hundreds of millions of people who produce the bulk of the world's food on family farms, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said.

"FAO is working with digital innovations, providing new inputs for farmers in rural areas. We need good governance and the right policies to support that, therefore FAO also helps countries access these new technologies to foster digitalization in agriculture," he told agriculture ministers from more than 70 countries and officials from organizations including the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the African Development Bank, gathered for a high-level meeting in Berlin.

Assuring that transformative digital technologies leave no one behind means finding ways to allow rural smallholders, including young people, to tap into them, boost their productivity and improve their market access, he told the officials attending the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, which this year focused on the potential of digital technology's contributing to the future of farming. FAO has numerous initiatives that seek to leverage emerging technologies to tackle smallholder, youth and gender challenges around the developing world. Full Story.

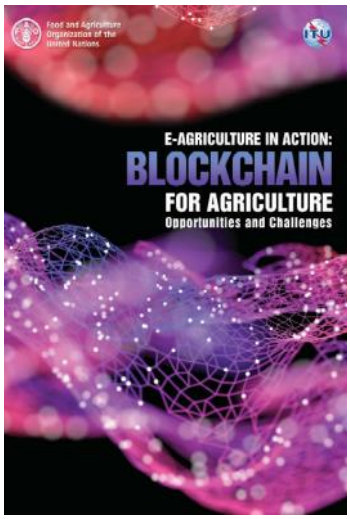
LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Monitoring food security in countries with conflict Situations

This report, facilitated by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) and produced under the Global Network Against Food Crises, provides United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members with an overview of the magnitude, severity and drivers of acute food insecurity in eight countries and regions that have the world's highest burden of people in need of emergency food, nutrition and livelihood assistance as a result of protracted conflict combined with other factors.

These countries are: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lake Chad Basin, Somalia, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. According to latest analyses from late 2018 (mainly Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC]), around 56 million people need urgent food and livelihood assistance in these countries. Full Report.

Blockchain for Agriculture, Opportunities and Challenges

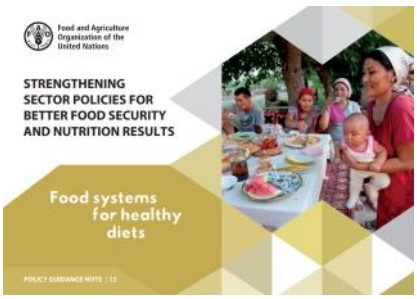


The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have recently published a title called, 'Blockchain for Agriculture, Opportunities and Challenges' as part of the E-Agriculture in Action series publications.

The focus of the publication is on blockchain technology in agriculture. The aim of the book is to demystify the technology, and provide some thoughts on the opportunities and challenges in implementing blockchain-based systems. The publication also includes case studies on the use of blockchain in Agriculture.

The publication begins by explaining what blockchain, using simple and clear examples easy for non-technical people to understand. It further explores various types of block chains and initial uses. Full report.

Policy Guidance: Food systems for healthy diets



This guidance note supports the use of a comprehensive food systems approach (rather than a sectoral approach) and gives guidance on how to use food systems entry points to guide the delivery of healthy diets and subsequently address all forms of malnutrition. Guidance Note.

FAO AND THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has deep roots in North America. The Organization was conceptualized in the United States during a meeting in Hot Springs, Virginia in 1943, and its first headquarters was located in Washington, DC. In 1945, FAO was formally established as a specialized agency by the newly created United Nations during its very first session, which was held in Quebec City, Canada. FAO's headquarters was permanently moved to Rome, Italy in 1951. The FAO Liaison Office for North America, based in Washington, DC, continues to strengthen the Organization's partnership with Canada and the United States.

FAO shares with Canada and the United States a vision of how to achieve a world without hunger and poverty. Both member states have been working closely with FAO since its inception more than 70 years ago. Canada and the United States both play critically important leadership roles within FAO and they are also among the Organization's largest financial supporters.

FAO's Liaison Office for North America works to support and implement FAO policies and programs through strategic partnerships with governments and other key stakeholders based in Canada and the United States, including civil society organizations, multilateral institutions, research centers and think tanks, the private sector, philanthropic foundations, and the media.

Read more about FAO and Canada and the Unites States.

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