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Editors' Note

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EDITORS' NOTE

The food crisis has been at the forefront of the global consciousness for much of this year. Although food inflation is nothing new, the combination of rising commodities prices, increased fuel costs, greater consumer demand, and shifts from food to energy crops has made the cost of food an issue at every table. The issue brings with it a myriad of questions about not only the cause of rising prices but also how global food and agriculture impacts sustainability, climate change, and individual health and consumption decisions.

Our global agricultural system is about much more than the food we eat. On a large scale, it is also about how domestic and international agricultural policies impact our air, water, and soil. On a more local scale, it is also about working landscapes, urban sprawl, and rural livelihoods. And individually, it is about our health, nutrition, and lifestyle choices. Finally, it is about the access and equity necessary for everyone to realize the potential benefits of a thriving and efficient global food and agricultural system.

As we considered putting together an SDLP issue on food and agriculture, the wide range of potential topics was striking. We hope to provide a broad overview of some of these issues along with explanations of ongoing and potential future solutions. Articles range from a synopsis of the recent global food crisis to the potential for and limitations of genetically modified crops in addressing the crisis. Our contributors touch on biofuels, organic agriculture, green labeling, tobacco farming, rural land use, and the 2008 Farm Bill in the United States. With this issue, we hope SDLP will help move the discourse beyond the common rhetoric of blame and defeat towards creative solutions for effective and efficient use of our global agricultural resources for today's growing population and future generations.



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