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Steps China is Taking to Improve Food Security

Throughout the world there are men, women and little children who have not even the essentials to stay alive; they crowd the cities of many of the poorest countries in the world. This crime fills me with shame. My brothers, how can you watch these people die before your eyes and call yourselves men? (Meitreyā)

There are many problems going on in our world today. A major problem is the constant increase on gas prices; another is the huge demand for corn. The economy is progressing slowly and the problems are increasing by the day. One of the most current problems is food security. Food security is a problem because every day people are starving because they don't have enough money to pay for food. Many people are living in poverty because they cannot keep up with the rising food and energy prices.

Every year my family and I always go on vacation; we take trips to different places around the country. I can remember walking in Chicago and seeing a homeless person lying under a tree, but that wasn't the only place I saw them. We also took a trip to Mexico where I saw a higher percentage of people living like this. It was a sad sight to see. Every year I see more and more, and this is just around where I live. The number of poverty is increasing each year; the world needs to take action.

China's small holder farmers and urban families are struggling to make a living because of these global changes. China should address the problems causing these prices to rise and conduct research in crop biology to discover new agricultural technology to insure food security.

Food security is a feeling of certainty, knowing that tomorrow you will have something to eat and not worrying that you will go hungry or starve. East Asia is one of the countries having a hard time with food security. A huge proportion of people in East Asia are living in poverty, and with the rise in food and energy costs, it is driving more people in to poverty. The world is starting to run low on food. Asia must take action now or the situation will just continue to grow. According to Lennart Bage, "Food production will need to raise fifty percent by 2030 in order to meet growing demand. Much of this production will come from commercial farms." China could aid in this food shortage by developing new research in agriculture. New agriculture technology could help create larger productivity and help farmers obtain a larger income to help dig themselves out of poverty.

There is such a large poverty percent because China is one of the most populated regions in Asia. Actually it is the most populated in the world. One reason is because of such large families in China. On average women usually have five to six children. They believe in getting married and having children at an early age. "More children means great happiness" (Le Wei-xiong). One reason why the families are so large is because small farms need help to work on the field.

Many people in china are involved in agriculture, but because China is so large its resources are limited and cannot support such a large population. So a population policy must be made to control the population growth. The policy depends on the amount of resources the region contains. One of these limited resources is water. China is just about as big as the U.S. but, one thing that China does not have is a lot of arable land. China is running out of fresh water to irrigate their crops. With out irrigation they can not produce a large yield. China's future lies in the hands of its education programs.

“China’s education is made up of four components: basic education, occupational, common higher education, and adult education” (Xinhua News Agency). Basic education consists of primary, Junior, and senior levels; which is a total of about twelve years. China is a lot like the U.S.; after you are finished with your basic schooling you have a choice to continue your education in occupational college. Adults who did not choose to go to occupational college have a chance to go to schooling aimed towards adults. Without education there would be no progress in agriculture. Farmers and workers would not have to right knowledge to successfully grow crops. Without any crops they could not support the population of China, and the people would have to change the way they eat.

There are basically four main types of cooking in china: Cantonese, Manarin cuisine, Shanghai Cooking, and Szechuan cuisine. Most of these ways of cooking contain one common ingredient, rice. The Chinese love it; so much that they eat it several times a day. One good thing about rice is that it is cheap. That is one reason why China grows so much of it, and it fills you up too. Rice can be mixed with many different foods, Such as: vegetables, meats, and beans. Rice is basically a staple food in China; but rice isn’t all they eat. They eat many exotic foods like shark fins, seaweed, frogs and many other things. One food that the Chinese depend on is Tofu. Tofu is a huge source of the Chinese’s protein. The people that China relies on for this food to support their eating habits are the farmers.

There are two main types of families in China that are being affected by these drastic changes, small farm families and urban families. Many of the small farms in China vary in size. Since there is such a demand in food today farmers have to increase their productivity. Many of the things that they grow are vegetables, fruits, aquatic products, and livestock. One problem that farmers face is arable land. Like I said before China is running out of water and many parts of China are not suitable for farming. Since there is not a lot of arable land farmers are limited on how much they can grow and where. China only owns seven percent of the world’s arable land and with that they must feed twenty percent of the world’s population. There used to be a huge surplus of rice covering the fields of China, but now it is changing because of the world demands and the means to support the economy.

What used to be rice fields is now turning into rubber fields. Small farmers are now replacing their rice fields with baby rubber trees. In hopes of reaping large benefits in the future. Since there is such a large demand for rubber today China plans on becoming the number one supplier in the world, hoping that while growing it, it will help to lift them out of poverty. Who is involved in planting these fields?

Women play a big role in agriculture. Twenty to thirty percent of the people involved in agricultural activities are woman. Whether it be planting or processing, the amount of women working in agriculture is still growing today. Lots of women work the fields in order to make an income to help their struggle with income, lack of education, job security, and much more. Women have a very poor life quality in China. Many countries are trying to seek new ways to improve the life quality of these people.

Many countries believe in protectionism which is used in hopes to reduce poverty. It encourages farmers to plant lower value crops that many countries buy a surplus amount of, instead of planting high-value crops that many countries don’t purchase because they are non-traditional. They hope by doing this they will achieve a higher profit.

One thing that many farmers look for is market opportunities, to help them increase their income. One thing that will do that is trade liberalization. It allows farmers to sell there products at a higher price and invest in technology to help boost there productivity for a higher overall income. China has been looking to change their agricultural practices that have been causing them to lose money.

To increase income, many countries charge a large import tariff on their foods, but one effect of this is the poor consumers pay the price. They have to spend more money on the foods, which in terms

makes them less food secure. A big problem that China faces that causes them to lose money is pesticide residue. Many products that China sends are returned because the pesticide level is higher than the country allows. So in the long term China will lose a lot of money if they do not act quickly. China should establish regulations of packing, labeling, and processing procedures. China's agriculture departments should create a system to guarantee product safety. This system should consist of:

- Hygienic quarantine system that covers agricultural products, such as animals and plants, to ensure that no diseases or pests come to China.
 - A detailed regulation on labeling genetically modified food and plants should be promulgated.
 - Should set up a quota system for agricultural products and block excessive imports of soybean oil and rapeseed oil.
- www.english.peopledaily.com

One major threat to China's stability is its unemployment crisis. If China doesn't have any jobs who will solve China's economy problem. In order for China to become a service dominated economy it must have available jobs. There are so many people in China without jobs, and because of that it drives them deeper into poverty.

One group of people that need help is farmers. Prices on almost everything are going up. The cost for fertilizers and many other inputs have risen. To make an income they must grow bigger yields. In order to do so, they need access to finance to help pay for the rising components for farming. They need technology that will help them enhance their productivity.

In order to do all this you need to invest. Invest in programs that support science; to create new technology. Most of these farmers only live on a ration of two dollars a day; they can't afford to spend more than that. A main reason why so many people in China live in poverty is because they have insufficient purchasing. They spend their money on the wrong things. What has China been doing to reduce poverty and hunger?

One-sixth of the world's population still suffers from under nourishment. Simulations have shown that replacing implicit tax on consumption with equivalent explicit tax and investing this revenue in agriculture research can be enormously beneficial for increasing employment, income, and consumption of food. (Nash and Mitchell)

This is what China needs to do; they need to invest their money in things that help the economy and the people. I think they should create education programs to educate farmers on regulations for trading and how to improve the quality of their products.

Poor food quality is one reason why there is an augment in chronic diseases like obesity and heart disease. To change these health conditions, China is looking into genetically modified products. This can be advantageous in a couple different ways. The plant can be modified to have a higher nutrient content to extend the nutritious value. This can help the overall health of the consumer, but nutritious value is not all they contain. They can modify it to have a better quality. China can not only look at the benefits though, they have to look at disadvantages also.

One factor that China is looking at is will it effect the environment. Modified products can be genetically altered to adapt to the environment, but will this affect the quality? Some concerns scientists have are gene transfers between domestic and wild plants. This has been recorded happening, but hasn't posed a threat. So far (GM) products have shown positive results.

Another benefit of using genetically modified products is you can modify the products to have lower toxin compounds and allergens. This helps the farmers by not having to spend as much money on pesticides and other necessities, giving them a larger profit. Genetically modified products won't just help China, but it can help the whole world by having the product modified to adapt to any environment they are in. Many countries are realizing this and taking the steps to advance.

Many countries think that by just increasing productivity that they will improve food security. I feel that if you are to improve food security you must have many components not just increased productivity. To fight hunger you must include nutritional education, health infrastructure, safety nets, and others; but the biggest reason for under nutrition is income. You have to find a way to create a greater income and more market opportunities for farmers and urban families.

John Nash and Donald Mitchell had researched and discovered some good ideas to create more market opportunities for small farmers. They found that global trade liberation would be a good way to get more farmers involved in the markets of trade to increase their income and to help with food security:

Global trade liberation is only on weapon in the arsenal to fight hunger, but it can make an important contribution by delivering cheaper food in protectionist countries and boosting the global economy, helping to lift million out of poverty. Doha trade liberalization need to shift the focus from how the trading system can be used to increase the degree of self-sufficiency to how it can help raise the incomes of the poor. They should focus on these components:

- Doha Round agreement, all countries rich and developing should commit to lowering bound rates on food and other agricultural products to significantly reduce applied tariffs.
- Individual developing countries should enhance household food security by lowering applied tariffs on food product imports.
- Rural development strategies should focus policy, as well as productivity- enhancing investments and support services, on raising rural incomes and improving the environment for agricultural production in general, not on increasing food production.
- The practice of export taxation in periods of high world prices should be restricted.

Part of the solution to food security is to eradicate import barriers, in periods of exceptionally low world prices. (Nash and Mitchell)

There are many ways in solving food security. China just needs to open their eyes to the possibilities. A wise man named Thomas Jefferson once said, "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bands." Farmers are some of the most important people in the economy. They are the future of agriculture; without farmers we wouldn't have what we do today. So we need to protect them and aid them in improving food security, by creating education and investing in scientific research to develop new technology. China has been taking some of these steps in hopes of improving the lives of the Chinese and helping to lift them out of poverty.

Food security does not only pertain to China, it applies to the world. When I go shopping I see the prices rising every month. Since there has been such a spike in oil prices, the U.S. has been trying to find new forms of energy. Ethanol is a great example, but with new forms of energy comes a price. Since there is such a demand of corn, prices are rising for the consumers. Consumers are struggling to keep up with rise in prices; some can't. This causes food insecurity.

I don't think China is doing enough to help this. That is why their poverty levels are so high. They need to create more education and jobs to improve this insecurity, and create more products like (GM) plants. I think that what they are doing about trade regulations is good, but they just need to expand on those ideas. China has looked at issues that may be causing food insecurity in hopes to improve life quality.

What I have taken away from this research is that China is taking the necessary precautions to solve food security; they are creating new programs and technology to solve food security. I've learned about their culture and how they live, and that China is taking the steps to solve their agriculture problems, but what are we doing.

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