

The Manifesto on Climate Change and the Future of Food Security

Bernward Geier

The increasing number of reports covering food riots around the globe demonstrates the failure of food and agriculture policies of the last few decades. They also support the view that there is an urgent need to convert to policies that defend people's right to food through the promotion of ecological and local food models, which reduce destructive impacts on the environment while increasing availability of diverse sources of food and nutrition. The riots also emphasize how current global trade and economic policies promote and enforce a highly energy intensive food and agriculture system that is directly at odds, not only with food security and the planet's ecological imperative, but also with greenhouse gas emission targets set by the United Nations and governments.

The International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture, a joint initiative between the regional Government of Tuscany, Italy, and a group of leaders of civil society, academics, and government representatives, has released a ***Manifesto on Climate Change and the Future of Food Security***. The Manifesto assesses that the industrial and globalized food system is a major contributor to climate change, responsible for at least 25 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, the present food system is also extremely vulnerable to climate change. Basically, every corner of the globe has already been touched by dramatic weather shifts that have affected crop production and food distribution.

Yet governments and policy makers are not addressing the contradiction between promoting an industrial, fossil fuel driven food system that creates both food and energy insecurity, but that also exacerbates climate insecurity. The Commission's report synthesizes interdisciplinary scientific research that establishes that ecological organic agriculture is a vital solution both for mitigating and adapting to climate change, and for ensuring food security for all. The Manifesto outlines transitions necessary to ensure food for all while protecting our fragile planet. It also explores some of the false agricultural solutions that are being promoted in the name of "clean" or "green" energy – namely, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and large-scale production of agrofuels. Most importantly, it demonstrates that ecological organic food systems are a real solution to current climate concerns in terms of mitigation and adaptation and an energy transition to a post-fossil fuel era.

Finally, this manifesto makes a call for food systems to be an integral part of the climate and energy discussions in current climate negotiations.

Support the Manifesto on Climate Change and the future of food security

From the beginning, IFOAM has supported and actively participated in the Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture, chaired by Vandana Shiva and hosted by the regional

Government of Tuscany, Italy. The former IFOAM Director Bernward Geier has a mandate of permanent membership on the commission (see www.future-food.org).

After the publication of two previous manifestos – one on the future of food and other on the future of seed – the commission has just published its third manifesto, which is on climate change, agriculture and the future of food security. The official international launch of the manifesto took place during the IFOAM World Congress in June in Modena, Italy, but it was also presented and discussed at two events at the recent Slow Food Terra Madre world gathering of food communities, farmers, chefs, scientists, activists, NGOs and youth, in both instances to packed auditoriums. The Manifesto was the most sought after document at the Terra Madre gathering with more than 5,000 copies distributed in five languages, with demand being much higher (for more information see www.terramadre.info).

The Commission has launched a worldwide campaign for signatures to sign up and support the manifesto's principles and to make an urgent call for agriculture to be included in the climate discussions at the Kyoto 2 Summit in Copenhagen in December 2009. The Manifesto and the signature campaign will be distributed in Copenhagen. Importantly, the manifesto fully reflects and covers the role and potential solution of organic agriculture in the context of climate change and, thus, deserves broad support from the organic movement.

The manifesto can be downloaded from the Commission website: www.future-food.org. It is also possible to sign up (either as individual or as organization) on the website as a supporter of the manifesto.