

## No shortage of food globally, but inequity in distribution

I don't think there is a food shortage at all. There is food inequity, but no shortage. The problem is not that supply doesn't meet need. It's that in an unconstrained free market for food, poor people starve because rich people can afford and want enormous quantities of animal protein.

Let me state without any personal doubt that there are real sustainability issues with food production. There's soil depletion. There's the reliance on the Haber process, in turn dependent on a natural gas supply, for fertilizer, though in that case I imagine that there are substitutes. There's nitrogen runoff. There's the various problems with agribusiness, including the mismatched and emblematic battle between Monsanto and the Monarch butterflies, which gets stunningly little attention in the public discourse, or what passes for discourse these days.

The appetites of the rich are at odds with the necessities of the poor. The greater the progress of the emerging economies, the more dire the situation of those living in the economies left behind. Again, I'm not by any means saying there are no problems on a regional basis. But global food production is currently at an enormous surplus. In a free market, most of it is fed to cows, pigs, and chickens. If prices become volatile, the cows and pigs and chickens can outbid the poorest people. If we fix that somehow, nobody will starve.

**Read the full, original article:** [Is there a current or imminent global food shortage?](#)