

So can we really feed the world? Yes — and here's how

Over the past six months I've been trying to figure out how we can feed ourselves sustainably and equitably without wrecking the planet. I've been reading, interviewing experts, [and blogging as I learn](#). This, the final post of the series, is a synthesis of what I've found out.

If the world goes on with business as usual, there's not going to be enough food to feed everyone by 2050. A lot of things would have to change.

And a lot of things **should** change! Currently, the daily effort to satisfy the collective appetite of humanity is causing deforestation, erosion, extinction, and massive release of greenhouse gases. In changing how it feeds itself, humankind can drive down poverty, sequester greenhouse gas, conserve wild environments, and put organic matter back into the soil. All of that is plausibly within reach.

As I put it in [this story](#), farm technology isn't a war between good and evil — it's a quest for whatever works. Small farmers have proven that they can use tools of industrial ag in a non-industrial way. They use high-tech hybrid seeds to get [record-breaking yields with an alternative cropping technique](#). Across India, small [farmers have found](#) that genetically engineered cotton decreases their pesticide exposure while increasing their earnings. And in Niger, farmers developed a method of using Big Ag fertilizer on a tiny scale: by filling a soda-cap with a mix of phosphorus and nitrogen, and dumping this micro-dose in with each seed.

I've heard the argument that we won't be able to feed the world without GMOs. I doubt that's true. The goal of helping small farmers improve their lives gets a lot harder if they are held to an impossibly Edenic standard, and we keep rejecting the tools that they'd like to use.

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