Map highlights where cropland has room to grow

If we don't start producing more food, we're going to run out in the future. With world population growing and climate change affecting crop yields, studies show a "calorie gap" of as much as 70 percent by 2050.

To start to tackle this, experts know we need to reduce food waste, develop new technology, like seeds that are more drought-resistant, and raise yields from farmland in a way that doesn't just involve using more fertilizers and pesticides.

These are not easy things to do, but these maps show where we might look to start to increase food production. They show existing cropland and how intensely the land is farmed today. For each area, it shows both the percentage of cropland and the type of farm—whether it's small, very small, medium or large. The maps are at a better resolution than anything available previously. The field size map—a proxy for farm mechanization—is the first of its kind.

"If you want to close yield gaps, you need to know where you are currently cultivating and what kind of soil there is," says Steffen Fritz, a scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, in Vienna.

The maps also help develop land sustainably. You can see where small, inefficient farms could be developed into bigger, more effective farms, or where virgin land is uncultivated. They might also help avoid deforestation, which would only fuel more climate change.

Read full, original article: The Most Detailed Map Of The World's Cropland Shows Where There's Room To Feed Everyone