

Viewpoint: National security and agriculture — Why the US needs a forward-thinking farming blueprint that ‘encourages local produce, livestock raising and meat processing’

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed an ignored truth of the American agriculture system: While the U.S. agricultural system is able to produce more than enough calories for all U.S. citizens, the system may be less resilient than the third-world countries receiving aid. The U.S. food system is a fragile and completely overlooked, yet essential, element of the country’s national security.

...

At its base, the industry is dependent on vulnerable workers, monoculture products, and an intricate national distribution system. While this enables consumers nationwide to buy tomatoes from California inexpensively in February, it is a delicately balanced system. From field to fork, each node has proven vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic food supply and distribution frailty.

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Italy provides a unique example as to a hybrid system that incorporates large-scale agriculture and locally sourced products. While hardest hit in Europe, Italy did not have the empty shelves or supply disruptions to the extent experienced in the U.S. This is largely due to town markets and locally sourced butcher shops common across the country... This combination of protectionism and support could be re-created here in the United States.

It is imperative for national security to make a deliberate effort to encourage local produce, livestock raising and meat processing.

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