

The Right to Food, Public Health, & US Food / Agriculture Policy

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Overview

- I. Right to Food
- II. Farm Bill
- III. Applying Right to Food to the Farm Bill
- IV. Benefits of human rights language

2007 World Food Day Theme

Achieving the right to food
– the human rights challenge
of the twenty-first century



THE
RIGHT
TO
FOOD

World Food Day
16 October 2007
www.fao.org



The right to Adequate Food



the
RIGHT
to
FOOD

<http://www.fao.org/righttofood/>

Key Human Rights Documents

- International Convention on Civil & Political Rights (1976)
- Convention on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights (1976) (US not ratified)
 - General Comment 12 (1999)
- Voluntary Guidelines (2004)



Applies to the US?

- Didn't want to enter into treaties
 - Concerned about obligations
- Human rights – implicit rights between individuals and their governments
 - Responsibility to people internationally?
 - Responsibility of corporations?
 - ICESCR non-signatories legally responsible?

Two Aspects of Right to Food

- Right to Freedom from Hunger (*absolute*)
- Right to Adequate Food (*relative*)
 - Sustainable access to food in a quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy dietary and cultural needs

General Comment 12

“The right to adequate food is defined as the right of every man, woman and child alone and in community with others to have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement in ways consistent with human dignity.”



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Respect, Protect, Fulfill

- **Respect**
 - Don't stand in the way
- **Protect**
 - Get others out of the way
- **Fulfill**
 - Help people make their own way
 - Provide food, when there's no other way
- Progressive implementation, maximum of available resources
- External obligations

Farm Bill Titles (2002)

- **I: Commodities**
- **II: Conservation**
- **III: Agricultural Trade and Aid**
- **IV: Nutrition**
- **V: Farm Credit**
- **VI: Rural Development**
- **VII: Research**
- **VIII: Forestry**
- **IX: Energy**
- **X: Miscellaneous**
- **2007 Proposed: Competition/Livestock**

Selected Farm Bill Issues - 1

- Subsidies, Food Stamps, Trade (discussed)
- Nutrition – Healthy Foods
 - Community Food Projects, local food system enterprise development, fruits & vegetables in schools, Food Stamp Nutrition Education
- Conservation
 - Comprehensive Stewardship Program, Conservation Reserve Program, EQIP

Selected Farm Bill Issues - 2

- Credit / Rural Development – enabling farms, rural viability
- Energy – support for corn ethanol
- Research
- Competition – level playing field for small & sustainable operations

Right to Food vs. Farm Bill

	Phys Access	Econ Access	At All Times	Free – Hunger	Dietary Needs	No Adv. Subst.	Cult./ Dignity
Commodities							
Conservation							
Trade							
Nutrition							
Credit							
Rural Devel							
Research							
Forestry							
Energy							
Misc.							
Competition							

Physical Access

	Phys Access	Econ Access	At All Times	Free – Hunger	Dietary Needs	No Adv. Subst.	Cult./ Dignity
Commodities							
Conservation							
Trade							
Nutrition							
Credit							
Rural Devel							
Research							
Forestry							
Energy							
Misc.							
Competition							

Physical Access

- Infrastructure for getting healthy & local foods to 'food deserts'
 - Nutrition
- Food availability in areas where local food system undermined
 - Trade
- Time to get food from overseas
 - Trade

Economic Access

	Phys Access	Econ Access	At All Times	Free – Hunger	Dietary Needs	No Adv. Subst.	Cult./ Dignity
Commodities							
Conservation							
Trade							
Nutrition							
Credit							
Rural Devel							
Research							
Forestry							
Energy							
Misc.							
Competition							

Economic Access

- Adequate livelihood to enable buying own food
 - Trade, Credit/Rural Development, jobs
- Food costs
 - Energy, Commodities
- Food safety net
 - Nutrition

At All Times (Sustainable Access)

	Phys Access	Econ Access	At All Times	Free – Hunger	Dietary Needs	No Adv. Subst.	Cult./ Dignity
Commodities							
Conservation							
Trade							
Nutrition							
Credit							
Rural Devel							
Research							
Forestry							
Energy							
Misc.							
Competition							

At All Times (Sustainable Access)

- What we produce
 - Commodities, Energy, Nutrition
- How we produce it
 - Conservation
- Sustainability of local food system
 - Trade, Nutrition
- Sustainability of small-medium agriculture
 - Rural Development / Credit / Competition

Analysis In Sum

- Human rights and right to food have been irrelevant to policy development
- Analysis suggests a way to examine policy in human rights context
 - Who could be mobilized
 - What could be said
 - Shaming, Blaming, AND Praising

Benefits of Human Rights Approach

(*WITH* economic, political, other arguments)

- “Rights” confers priority as a social goal
- Policy responses as **obligations**
 - Not charity/altruism;
 - Not economic strategy
- Every person has claims
 - No claims for corporations or “the majority”
- Hold countries to standards they and/or international community have endorsed



AAAS Science and Human Rights Program

[http://shr.aaas.org/
manuals/food/RTF.pdf](http://shr.aaas.org/manuals/food/RTF.pdf)

The Right to Food:
A Resource Manual for NGOs

Written by
Rolf Künemann & Sandra Epal-Ratjen

The Right to Adequate Food



RIGHT
FOOD

Photo: S. Varani / Design: F. López Right to Food Portal <http://www.fao.org/righttofood/>

Freedom from Hunger

	Phys Access	Econ Access	At All Times	Free – Hunger	Dietary Needs	No Adv. Subst.	Cult./ Dignity
Commodities							
Conservation							
Trade							
Nutrition							
Credit							
Rural Devel							
Research							
Forestry							
Energy							
Misc.							
Competition							

Freedom from Hunger

- Providing adequate calories
 - Nutrition
 - Trade
- Adequacy of food access under anti-hunger programs
 - Nutrition
 - Trade

Dietary Needs

	Phys Access	Econ Access	At All Times	Free – Hunger	Dietary Needs	No Adv. Subst.	Cult./ Dignity
Commodities							
Conservation							
Trade							
Nutrition							
Credit							
Rural Devel							
Research							
Forestry							
Energy							
Misc.							
Competition							

Dietary Needs

- Adequacy of healthy food production
 - Commodities
 - Nutrition
- Provision of healthy foods through government programs
 - Nutrition
 - Trade

No Adverse Substances

	Phys Access	Econ Access	At All Times	Free – Hunger	Dietary Needs	No Adv. Subst.	Cult./ Dignity
Commodities							
Conservation							
Trade							
Nutrition							
Credit							
Rural Devel							
Research							
Forestry							
Energy							
Misc.							
Competition							

No Adverse Substances

- Pesticide residues, substances in drinking water
 - Conservation

Culturally Appropriate / Accessible with Dignity

	Phys Access	Econ Access	At All Times	Free – Hunger	Dietary Needs	No Adv. Subst.	Cult./ Dignity
Commodities							
Conservation							
Trade							
Nutrition							
Credit							
Rural Devel							
Research							
Forestry							
Energy							
Misc.							
Competition							

Culturally Appropriate / Accessible with Dignity

- What food is supplied
 - Commodities, Trade, Nutrition
- The “demand” side
 - Nutrition, Miscellaneous (Country of Origin)
- Rights/dignity of food producers
 - Competition