

Globalization Endangers Food Relief, Production

by Marcia Merry Baker

Jan. 21—The scale and desperation of food relief needs in Haiti spotlight the fact that worldwide food production and reserves are routinely far below requirements, including for emergency aid.

As of Jan. 18, the U.S. World Food Program (WFP) announced that it had distributed 1 million relief rations to 200,000 people in Haiti, and would shortly be ramping up to 10 million. The U.S. military is providing the logistics to distribute tons of MREs (meals ready to eat). All well and good.

But what about the *re-supply lines*? For Haiti, and for other points of need?

Decades of increasing globalization of the food supply have furthered shortages and tight cartel control of what is available. In fact, the tenet of the World Trade Organization (WTO) is that any food “surpluses” or “reserves” must be eliminated, because they “distort” the markets. A select few companies dominate commodities, genetics (seeds, livestock), processing, and distribution, while traditional and potential farming regions are being destroyed. Meantime, speculation is rampant. The most hated name in this process has come to be Monsanto, which led the way, partnering with Cargill, in grabbing patent-rights to food seeds—the means to life itself.

Food Aid Decline

Over the past two years, WFP director Josette Sheeran has repeatedly announced the cutback or elimination of relief rations, because of lack of food and financing. But she has never bucked “the system” behind it.

Cereal grains production, an obvious marker for food sufficiency, is falling per capita worldwide. Likewise for other basic foods, including tubers, and also animal protein, including dairy.

The volume of food aid of all kinds, from fortified relief food products, to grains, milk powder, and other commodities, has declined drastically over the last 15 years, while the need has increased. As of November 2009, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that 1.1 billion people—one-sixth of the world’s population—are going hungry.

Table 1 shows the dramatic decline of tonnage of aid delivered worldwide, and also the rising percent of that aid that went for emergency, as opposed to pre-planned, assistance projects.

A drive to reverse all this was initiated by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, before the June 2008 FAO World Food Summit in Rome, as part of a mobilization for a new world credit system, to replace the collapsing monetarist globalization, and build up nations and their economies again. Zepp-LaRouche called for doubling world food production in the shortest time possible. Today, this objective is part of the effort by Lyndon LaRouche for a Four Powers initiative by Russia, China, India, and the United States, for a new credit system and massive agro-industrial and infrastructure advance.

Dairy Sector Battle

Farmers in several of the world’s leading dairy regions are in a do-or-die battle with globalization, fighting for the right to continue producing food. They are being financially ruined by receiving prices far beneath their costs of production, and by the refusal of their governments to intervene against WTO rules. Throughout Europe, farmers have conducted strikes and protests. In the United States, there are defensive actions. Likewise in Australia and Argentina.

Total annual world milk production is remaining in the inadequate range of 700 million tons, and set to drop, whereas rapid growth is needed. About 5.5% of this, or 40 million tons, is traded globally in various forms. A cartel of mega-dairy firms controls this, and dominates many domestic markets.

Leading names in the world dairy cartel: Nestlé (headquartered in Switzerland), Dean Foods (U.S.A.), Danone (France), Fonterra (New Zealand/British Commonwealth), Unilever (U.K./Netherlands), Kraft (U.S.A.), Lactalis (France).

TABLE 1
Food Aid

Year	Metric Tons in Millions	Percent to Emergencies
1993	17.4	25%
2003	10.2	62
2007	5.9	62

Source: World Food Program’s Interfaix.