

Food and Nutrition Security and Agriculture: perspectives from Asia

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The world's population is growing rapidly such that by 2050 it is estimated that the world will need to produce 70% more food than it does today. Much of the growth in population numbers will occur in developing nations and it is also expected that with accompanying economic growth in these countries there will be a burgeoning middle class. As the middle class expands there is an increased relative demand for high protein foods such as eggs, fish, meat and dairy. This trend augments other trends that point to an escalating future demand for food proteins. Already, however, close to 800 million humans suffer from protein/ energy malnutrition, so the challenge to adequately feed the world's population will be formidable. It appears that there is sufficient cultivable land available to meet the increased demand, but agricultural productivity will need to increase and food wastage will need to decline. Education, research and extension in the agricultural, environmental and food sciences will be vital and centre-stage. The ability to use all food nutrients, but especially protein, wisely will become critical. Global Food Security will be discussed in the context of future population growth in Asia and the Pacific.