

## **Major Global Growth Industry: Food**

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Food production is going to be a lucrative business over the next 40 years, according to the National Academy of Sciences. Global food demand will increase by 70 percent by 2050 in order to feed 9.3 billion people. But the way in which food is produced must undergo a radical change. "Producing the amount of food needed could significantly increase levels of carbon dioxide and nitrogen in the environment and may cause the extinction of numerous species," says the study.

Greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture could double by 2050, constituting a "major problem since global agriculture already accounts for a third of all greenhouse gas emissions," according to report author David Tilman of the University of Minnesota. Countries must adopt a more focused "nitrogen efficient intensive" farming system rather than an "extensive" farming system used in poor nations of clearing more land to produce more food. The intensive system produces a 300 percent higher crop yield.

"If poorer nations continue current practices, they will clear a land area larger than the United States (two and a half billion acres) by 2050," says the study. "But if richer nations help poorer nations to improve yields, that number could be reduced to half a billion acres." Adds Tilman: "Our analysis shows that we can save most of the Earth's remaining ecosystems by helping the poorer nations of the world feed themselves."