From 7th International Congress of Plant Pathology, Edinburgh, August 1998

GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

During the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996, Heads of States agreed to halve the number of hungry people by 2015, which today number 800 million, almost all of them in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Hunger and poverty are inextricably linked and the solution does not rely on one factor, but on an interrelated complex of factors that includes population, technology, policy and social changes.

What are the facts about Global Food Security, and what are options for addressing the issue?

Of today's world population of 5.8 billion people, it is estimated that over 800 million people do not have adequate food, and 1.3 billion poor people live on less than $1 of income per day.

Approximately 50% of the world's poor people live in Asia, 2% in Africa, 12% in Latin America and the balance in other areas of the world.

The majority of these poor people live in rural areas of developing countries where the land is marginal and the ecosystems fragile. Currently, 80% of the global population reside in the developing world, where the annual increase in population is 1.9%.

Biotic stresses take a heavy toll of the 5 billion tons of food that is currently produced annually. Crop diseases, insect pests and weeds reduce global food production by at least one-third despite the fact that $32 billion dollars worth of pesticides are used on crops annually.

Plant diseases alone reduce global food production by more than 10% and the potato disease that caused the Irish famine in 1845 is again becoming prevalent and resulting in significant food losses.

What are the options for managing crop diseases to improve food security?

To address this question, five distinguished scientists addressed different aspects of the issue:

Clive JAMES (*Chairman, International Service for the Acquisition of Agribiotech Applications*)
Global Food Security

Norman BORLAUG (*Nobel Peace Laureate, Mexico*)
Food security, plant pathology and quarantine

Cyrus NDIRITU (*Director, Kenyan Agricultural Research Institute*)
Human capital investment in plant pathology: a view from the South

Robert WILLIAMS (*Deputy Director General, CAB International*)
Public-private sector partnerships in plant pathology that will contribute to food security

Paul TENG (*International Rice Research Institute, Philippines*)
Practising plant pathology in changing agricultural systems

Abstracts are archived at: http://www.bspp.org.uk/icpp98/toc_global.html

The Glenn Anderson Lecture was delivered at a separate Plenary Session:

AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY, PLANT PATHOGENS AND TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS

E.R. TERRY
Agricultural Research and Extension Group, The World Bank, Washington DC, USA