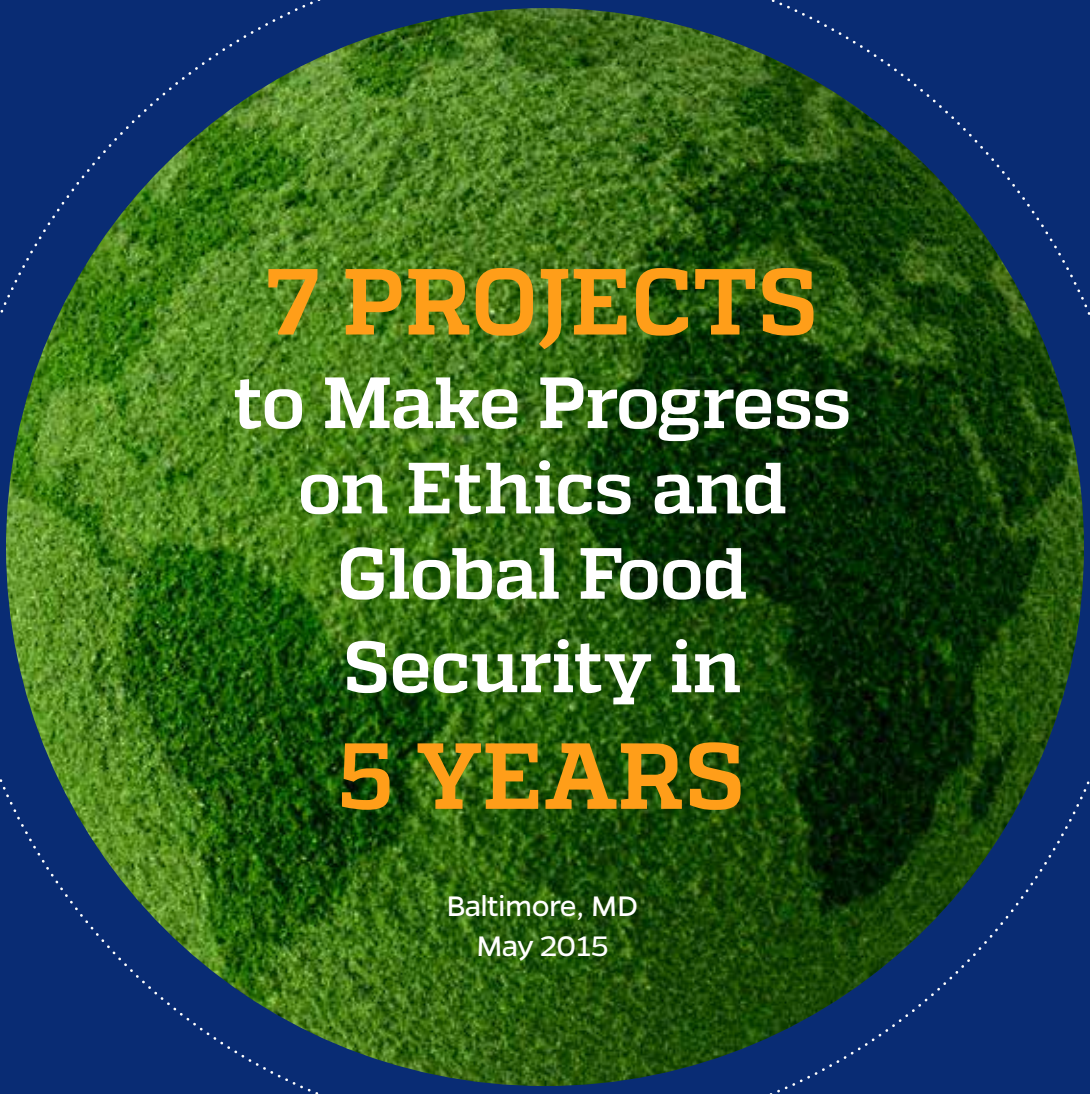

7 PROJECTS to Make Progress on Ethics and Global Food Security in 5 YEARS

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JOHNS HOPKINS BLOOMBERG SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC HEALTH

JOHNS HOPKINS BERMAN INSTITUTE *of* BIOETHICS

JOHNS HOPKINS SCHOOL *of* ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

We are committed to making the *7 by 5 Agenda for Ethics and Global Food Security* a reality. Projects are being further specified, relevant experts identified, and funding sought. As we work to bring attention to the *7 by 5*, our hope is not only to see these worthy projects undertaken, but also to help raise awareness in global and regional institutions and national governments of the critical importance of ethics to global food policy and practice. Feeding the world is an unquestionable moral imperative. But we must do more than that.

We must feed the world — ethically.

Project 1

Ethical Challenges in Projections of Global Food Demand, Supply, and Prices

The extent to which people now and in the future experience food security turns heavily on decisions about food and agricultural policy made today by national governments and international institutions. These policy decisions are frequently premised on specific projections of future food demand, supply, and prices. Given the importance of these projections in public policy and their potential impact on the welfare of present and future generations, they should be based on transparent, ethically defensible assumptions, and they should be free of bias and unethical influence. However, this is not always the case. Assumptions about poverty rates or environmental impact may be unclear or ethically problematic. Underlying empirical data may be weak or questionable. Entities who undertake projections may have strong interests in biasing the outcomes in a direction favorable to them, while entities relying on projections may have an interest in overestimating their accuracy. The overarching goal of this project is two-fold: (1) assess the extent to which ethically problematic behavior and assumptions are comprising the integrity of projections of food demand, supply, and prices and the use of the projection outcomes; and (2) make specific, concrete recommendations about ways to decrease bias and improve integrity.

Project 2

The Food Sovereignty Movement and the Exceptionality of Food and Agriculture

The transnational food sovereignty movement calls for the right of peoples to democratic control over food and agricultural and resource policy, as well as the right to healthy food produced through sustainable methods that respect cultural diversity. The movement seeks far-reaching changes in the structure of food markets and labor laws, public health and occupational health regulations, and ownership of land, water, and seeds. Supporters see the food sovereignty movement as a forceful critique of and a viable alternative to mainstream approaches to food security and the organization of the global food system. In contrast, policy makers, academic experts, and agribusiness often reject the positions of the food sovereignty movement as too radical, unworkable, and sometimes even contradictory. It is easy to dismiss these disagreements as stemming from commitments to incompatible economic, political, and ethical viewpoints and thus as irreconcilable. However, too much is at stake in the real world to allow these disagreements to go unaddressed. For example, the extent to which food and agriculture should be integrated in the global economy is a central question in any discussion of food security. The purpose of this project is to make progress on some disagreements between supporters and critics of the food sovereignty movement that are rooted in different positions on the special nature or exceptionality of food and agriculture. These disagreements are of profound ethical and practical significance, and they are also potentially amenable to partial resolution in a way that broader economic, political, and ethical disputes are not.

Project 3

The Case for the Professionalization of Farming

Agriculture has undergone widespread intensification in many high- and some middle-income countries. The changes include a shift to fewer larger farms, reduction of production costs, increased use of technology and automation, and in animal production, the use of confinement facilities where animals are often kept with limited space and few amenities. Intensification takes many forms, some of which are perceived favorably. However, some of the changes associated with intensification, which seem to emphasize efficiency and profit at the expense of other values, have engendered public concern about the trustworthiness of the agrifood sector and whether it should be more strongly regulated in order to better protect workers, animals, and the environment. While relying primarily on a regulatory approach to rebuilding trust in the agrifood sector may be effective in some contexts, it can run into serious difficulties when a country tries to apply it to many thousands of farmers. This project's goal is to explore a complementary approach to rebuilding trust in agriculture based on developing a "professional" model of farming. In this model, farming is reframed as a service-oriented profession, with farmers having specialized skills and fiduciary responsibilities to the public to meet legitimate expectations for food safety and environmental, worker, and farm animal protection.

Project 4

Global Agricultural Research and Development: Ethics, Priorities, and Funders

Agricultural research and development (R&D) is indispensable to ensuring sufficient yields, sustainable farming practices, food safety, and viable economic prospects for farmers and rural populations, many of whom face tremendous hardships. Agricultural R&D plays a key role in providing farmers with innovative technologies, improved crops and livestock, management innovations, extension services, best practices guidelines, and new economic tools to increase their income through farming or nonfarm activities. However, many farmers, particularly in low-income countries, do not sufficiently benefit from current advances in agricultural R&D. This is because the products developed through research, such as some seeds and pest management technologies, can be too expensive for disadvantaged farmers to adopt or are not suitable for their environment or farming systems. Moreover, although the global public and private budget allocated to agricultural R&D has increased over the last decades, it continues to be insufficiently responsive to the pressing needs and preferences of many disadvantaged farmers. The goal of this project is to develop institutional, reform-oriented recommendations to help ensure that a fair share of agricultural R&D resources is targeted towards the development of affordable, sustainable, and easy to use innovations that are directly responsive to the needs and preferences of disadvantaged farmers in low-income countries.

Project 5

Climate-Smart and Climate-*Just* Agriculture

According to the Nobel Prize-winning International Panel on Climate Change, current agricultural practices contribute significantly to climate change, and climate change poses a severe threat to global food security and public health. In response, strategies that can help mitigate and adapt to unavoidable climate change have been put forward under the label "climate-smart agriculture." These strategies include technologies and practices intended to increase productivity, reduce environmental impact, increase efficiency in scarce resource use, and improve food system resilience. However, agricultural practices cannot be genuinely climate-smart if they are not also climate-*just*. The benefits they produce and the burdens they impose must be fairly distributed on current populations and on future generations. For example, small farmers and their families living in tropical regions will be the hardest hit by droughts, extreme weather events, and higher temperatures. Although they have the greatest need, these small farmers will be the least able to afford climate-smart agriculture. As a consequence, the world's poorest and most disadvantaged populations may be the least likely to experience the promised benefits of these technologies, including improved food security and rural livelihoods. At the same time, as the environmental impact of agriculture in tropical regions increases, these same populations may be required to adopt other burdensome climate-smart technologies whose benefits fall disproportionately on others. The overarching goal of this project is to help prevent these unfair outcomes from occurring by showing why and how climate-smart agriculture can and ought to be climate-*just* across different geographic and temporal dimensions.

Project 6

Ethics of Meat Consumption in High-Income and Middle-Income Countries

Seemingly intractable debates about the ethics of meat consumption might be allowed to go on forever were it not for the harsh implications of globally increasing rates of meat consumption for human health and the environment. This project tackles ethical challenges in the consumption of animal-source foods from a broadened angle that does not focus primarily on the debate about animal interests and the individual rights of consumers. The overarching goal of this project is two-fold. The first goal is to determine the evidence-base for claims about (a) how much (if any) and what kinds of animal-source foods humans need to consume over the life course for optimal nutrition; and (b) what range of nutritionally optimal meat-inclusive diets is compatible with environmental sustainability. The second goal is to evaluate the justifications for and limits of government and private-sector interventions to move the dietary patterns of populations in high- and middle-income countries closer to this range.

Project 7

Consumers, Certifications, and Labels: Ethically Benchmarking Food Systems

Consumers around the world face a bewildering array of labels and designations — Fair Trade, Organic, Certified Humane, Equitable Food Initiative — that are intended to help them make food purchases that are consonant with their ethical and other values. However, many of these labels lack clarity, are insufficiently reliable, and are even sometimes misleading. The goal of this project is to develop a comprehensive labeling system for the ethics of food that aggregates information provided by existing accurate and reliable certification and labeling programs and to develop new certification processes for food values for which no reliable certification or labeling programs exist. This comprehensive system will address environmental sustainability, animal welfare, labor standards, public health, and food safety and will allow consumers to easily and accurately identify and incorporate ethically-based knowledge into their food choices. This labeling system is not meant to replace domain-specific certification programs that are accurate and reliable but to offer consumers easy access to integrated and trustworthy ethical information on the food they purchase. The integrated labeling system will also encourage actors all along the food value chain, from producers to retailers, to adopt practices endorsed by the system as a response to ethically-informed consumer demand.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

The Global Food Ethics Project team, advisors, and other Working Group participants included international experts in agronomy, animal welfare, anthropology, bioethics, climate change, economics, environmental sustainability, food safety, human nutrition, philosophy, plant breeding, and plant genetics.

The charge to this group was straightforward but daunting — to identify core ethical issues that are of critical importance to global food security and on which real progress could be made in three to five years.

FEEDING THE WORLD, ETHICALLY WORKING GROUP

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