



## The Hand That Feeds U.S.

### Feeding the World in a Responsible Way

There will be 1.25 billion more people on the planet by 2025—people who will need additional food, fiber and fuel. How will we sustainably feed the world's growing population? Home to some of the most fertile land on the globe, America will play a key role in supporting this expanding population.



- Global population currently stands at 6.8 billion—up from 2.5 billion in 1950 and 4.2 billion in 1980. It will reach 9 billion by 2050. *Source: United Nations*
- The United States and Brazil are two likely candidates to help shoulder the increasing burden of meeting tomorrow's food, fiber and fuel requirements. But, how the two countries farm couldn't be more different.
- U.S. farmers have greatly increased output even as land and other inputs have declined. From 1948 to 2004, U.S. agricultural production nearly *tripled* while land in agriculture fell by 25%. Because of high productivity growth, agricultural commodity prices rose at less than half the rate of inflation over those 56 years. *Source: USDA*
- Corn plantings alone have declined by 20% over the past 80 years, while productivity has climbed more than six-fold (25 bushels/acre to 150 bushels/acre), creating new opportunities for meeting nutritional and energy needs on a sustainable basis with a renewable resource. *Source: USDA*
- Conversely, more than 77,000 square miles of Brazilian rainforest were destroyed from 1998 to 2008—an area larger than New York and New Jersey combined. *Source: Brazilian National Institute of Space Research and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization*
- U.S. farm policy further bolsters environmental stewardship by dedicating more than \$5 billion annually to conservation programs that keep fragile land out of production and reward farmers who practice the best soil, water and habitat conservation techniques. *Source: Congressional Budget Office*
- U.S. agriculture also betters the environment through renewable energy. The U.S. ethanol industry displaced 321 million barrels of oil in 2008 and cut life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions by 14 million metric tons. *Source: Renewable Fuels Association*
- In addition to environmental practices, labor standards in Brazil and the U.S. differ greatly. Brazilian sugarcane workers make just 58 cents per hour, compared to a minimum of \$8.58 for workers in Florida sugar fields, according to a 2003 study conducted by Peter Buzzanell, a former USDA official.

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**"In no other country do so few people produce so much food, to feed so many, at such reasonable prices."**

— President Dwight D. Eisenhower