

## Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition

ID number: 931

### Summary

Food crisis, energy crisis, global financial crisis, economic crisis... It may seem that the world always suffers from crises, but on the ground of overpopulation, these problems are aggravating. A traditional farming lifestyle completely disappeared and people became slaves of the market – but if there is not enough food on the market, what will we do? Will we choose the step towards GMOs or step back to traditional gardening? Another problem is the shortage of land and replacing food crops by bio-fuel crops which means less and less food for more and more people in the world.

### Essay

*Once upon a time, there was a poor farmer living on his own farm with his family. Their life was very hard; they all had to work from morning till night to have enough food for his wife and five children. Despite of it, every day, before the farmer fell asleep, he was thinking about their future: will he be able to sustain his family thanks to the land?*

Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century may seem much easier – unlike the farmer, we have shops, groceries, shopping centers, so we do not have to struggle along on farms...but really? Maybe developed countries actually do not suffer from insufficiency of food, but if we take a look at the developing ones, we can see millions of people starving because they even do not have their proper land for farming. Owning the land has become the resource of well-being not only in less developed countries, but also in the developed ones. However, there is a difference – for poor people, the land means a possibility to grow their own crops, for the rich ones, it is the rent or money they receive from it. To sum up, the land has always been one of the key factors to survive. Moreover, on the ground of overpopulation, the quantity of arable land is decreasing and the shortage of land has turned into a serious global problem. So the question is why do not we appreciate rare resources such as land? As a result, more and more of them are becoming rare today – food, clean water, clean air...

The problem that faces us is that people completely forgot what the word “to appreciate” means. We do not realize how difficult the process of transforming seeds into vegetable, fruit or food is. Everything has become too simple for us – you can buy whatever with money. In the 1950s the average American household spent 22 percent of our household income for fresh, locally produced food. Currently we are spending 13-15%, though low-income households are spending 30-35% (<http://www.commondreams.org/archive/2008/06/13/9601>). Furthermore, as people left the traditional farming lifestyle, the new “boom” of different diseases has started - cancer, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, food allergies and birth defects.

This “new society” based on money has another negative – wasting. We waste everything – water, energies, food. There were some campaigns with slogans like “Save energy!”, but have you ever heard slogans like “Save water and food!”? In many parts of the world, the need for water has overrun the level of supply and according to prognosis, if the population increases as expected, in 2025 two thirds of world population will suffer from water deficiency ([www.greenfacts.org](http://www.greenfacts.org)). Wasting of food is typical for developed countries. The food crisis is the paradox in comparison to the huge food surplus in the most developed industrial countries. Almost a quarter of all food products on the market go directly to the trash can, even they have never been

used, according to WHO. The obesity in these countries is also increasing while people from other countries are starving. About 13% of world population suffers from malnutrition and more than 2 milliards of people don't have the possibility to eat regularly (FAO). Factors which even aggravate the food crisis are also riots. For example those on Haiti, in Cameroon, protests in Ivory Coast and demonstrations in Mauritania, Mozambique, Senegal, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Bolivia and Indonesia have uncovered the instability which is the result of increasing food prices.

Is the solution of food crisis in so controversial GMOs? The main negative is still the lack of information about their impact on health. As many researches as possible must be done to be sure that GMOs are not only a leap in the dark, but the right step towards the improvement of our well-being. Another solution to the food crisis may seem incredibly easy and logical - if we don't have enough food, we must produce more of it. However, our society does just the contrary - we use crops to produce bio-fuels. To produce 50 liters of bio-ethanol (nearly a tank), we need 232 kg of corn; the same amount of corn will sustain for example one child in Zambia for one whole year (OSN)! Thousands of square kilometers of land are used for growing crops for producing bio-fuels. Our generation must do an important decision – what is more important to us? Living in the healthy environment when other people die from starving or to reduce the wasting and develop other technologies to be able to feed every human being in the world? It is unbelievable that we pay farmers higher prices for bio-fuel crops than for food crops. Maybe this is the answer of our society.

The food and energy crises even aggravated in the previous year 2008 when the global financial crisis started. Prices of oil have dramatically increased in the USA; Americans were losing their jobs, prices of food were increasing, they were all afraid of their lives... their situation was and still is serious, but even when they suffer, they can hardly imagine the situation in Africa or South-East Asia where people struggle along all their lives. People got used to be very egoistical and egocentric, so maybe today, this difficult situation is an opportunity to realize that we cannot live longer like this. It is time to make the solidarity one of the key values of our generation and make it much more important than money which is often the only one limiting factor in global issues. Due to the food crisis, the advisor for UN Human Rights Council Olivier de Schutter said to Le Monde: "The world should prepare itself for the end of the era of "cheap food products".".

In the past 2000 years, times have changed dramatically, but the question of millions of parents falling asleep all over the world stays the same: *will we be able to sustain our families? Will we all ever live happily ever after?*