

## **Population**

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World population will continue to grow over the next several decades reaching an estimated 9 billion by the year 2050. Feeding all these people will be a major issue because as the population rises so will the cost of food. (Chatzimarkakis)

New technology is coming out with ways to feed the growing population through genetically modified foods. Although these genetically modified foods may have their advantages, you can bet that there are disadvantages that come with them as well. Critics warn that we do not know enough about the potential harm that such crops can cause to human health and ecosystems. Some scientists expect that genetically modified organisms cannot be recalled if they cause unintended harmful genetic and ecological effects. Once something is genetically modified, it cannot be reversed. Therefore, to better understand the risks, before going on with this technology, there should be more controlled field experiments along with more research and long-term safety testing. (Miller)

Before finding ways to create new food, we need to find a way of decreasing the amount of food that is wasted. It's one thing to waste the food on your plate at supper time, but the amount of food that is wasted by companies such as Wal-Mart is an even bigger issue. After spending last summer working in the produce department of Wal-Mart, I can assure you that the amount of waste is ridiculous. All food items are dated. For example, if a bag of

lettuce is dated to be sold no later than March 15, 2009, that bag is taken off the shelf on March 14, 2009 and thrown away. If the bag of lettuce can be sold by the 15th, then it must be good for at least another week past that date. If this is so, why can't that bag of lettuce be donated to the local food pantries that give food to the needy? I feel that local programs should be developed that can assign someone to pick up this wasted food and get it to the pantries for a free food give-a-way. During corn season when we had crates of corn on the cob for sale, we would place a large barrel next to the crates so that customers could husk their corn before buying it. Farmers would come into the store and ask me if they could have the barrels of husks to give to their cows. I was not permitted to give them the husks (that were to be thrown away), because if someone's cow became sick from eating them, then Wal-Mart could be held responsible. I would think that some type of release could be signed by the farmer, stating that Wal-Mart would not be held responsible if by chance a cow became sick from eating the husks. Since the corn husks can be food for the cows, I consider this to be waste as well.

Since the growing population will also cause an increase in greenhouse gasses, deforestation, depletion of the ozone, and loss of topsoil, we have no choice but to find a way to stop the population from growing so rapidly. Education and economic development are key to attaining population sustainability.

Empowering women through education and increasing their rights will help reduce the population. Most women who are educated obtain employment and are more confident and less dependent on men. Also educated women know how to keep their children healthy, get

better healthcare, and will make use of clinics, which in turn will make them more open to controlling the size of family they have. In developed countries, such as the United States, sex education should start with teenagers or even younger. Too many of our young are becoming pregnant during their high school years. Parents need to start talking more with their teenagers about the consequences of having a child while still being a child themselves. Also, schools need to get more involved with the process of educating students more about sex.

According to Bruce Sandquist, in an article published by [overpopulation.org](http://overpopulation.org), we should develop a list of options for achieving a modest 20 or so percent reduction in world population over the first half or so of the 21st century. I agree with his contributions to this list which include:

1. Increase First-World funding for international family planning--sufficient to insure that everyone in the Third World has access to family planning services.
2. Invest more in providing family planning services to poor First World folk in order to reduce the number of unwanted children in the First World.
3. Increase women's economic options world-wide - This always results in women wanting fewer children, and with universally available family planning they can have whatever number they want.
4. Separate out children from social security systems.
5. Limit immigration into the First World in order to reduce Third World population growth.

6. Reduce the use of animal (particularly cow) intermediaries in human consumption of grain. This would significantly increase agricultural efficiency and reduce the need for (and the stress on) crop land
7. Increase support for contraceptive research. (How to Attain Population Sustainability)

Based on what I have learned during my research, I have come to the conclusion that since overpopulation causes a chain of other issues, the best thing we can do is find ethical ways of reducing the population.

## Works Cited

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3. Miller, G. Tyler. Living in the Environment. 14th ed. USA: Jack Carey, 2005.