

Good News, Bad News - Where Do We Stand?

For each of the following, indicate whether you believe the statement to be good news or bad news. Also, give a brief reason for your decision.

1. Some countries are paying their farmers not to produce food.
2. Several dozen countries are individually more than three times as crowded as the United States.
3. Much potentially arable land must be irrigated.
4. Tropical land receives greater solar radiation, and multiple crops could be raised each year on this land.
5. The soil in many tropical areas is poor and erodes easily.
6. Infant deaths are dropping in almost every country in the world.
7. Most nations in the world now have family planning programs.
8. Many of the new high-yield varieties of grains have lower protein content than pre-World War II varieties.
9. Research is now concentrating on developing and testing grain varieties with higher protein content as well as possible additives to enrich the present varieties.
10. The population of the world is growing by over 80 million people each year.
11. Life expectancy has increased in most parts of the world.
12. There are more hungry mouths in the world today than ever before in history.
13. The use of improved seed lines, water control, more fertilizer, and disease and pest controls have together brought about sharp increases in grain production around the world.
14. The United States has 4.5% of the world's people and consumes 30% of the world's resources.
15. A map of the cultivated land on the planet shows Eastern and Central United States, Western Canada, Europe, India and China to be the major cropland areas; the best, by far, are those of the American midwest.
16. Most countries are running out of land that can be converted to cropland.
17. Land not under cultivation will require immense inputs of money for clearing, irrigation, and fertilization to make it productive.
18. Much productive land is used for non-nutritive crops (cash crops) such as tobacco and coffee.
19. The food that is annually lost in India to pests, poor storage, and poor transportation could feed 50 million people.
20. Less than 5% of the soils of the tropics are potentially fertile cropland.
21. Some poor families in North America have resorted to buying pet food as a source of protein.
22. There's a booming market in North America for vegetarian cookbooks.
23. It takes \$400 billion to build an inch of topsoil.
24. Annual consumption of red meat and poultry combined is at an all-time high in North America.
25. About 1/4 of the world's total grain is fed to livestock.
26. Since 1950, world cereal production has more than doubled.
27. Without a major expansion of arable land, the world average of 0.28 hectares (2800 square meters) of cropland per capita is expected to decline to 0.17 hectares by the year 2025 under current population projections.

28. In Asia, an estimated 82% of potential cropland is already under production.
29. Cropland expansion will most likely come at the expense of rangeland, forests, wetlands, and other areas that are both economically important and ecologically fragile.
30. The number of calories available per person rose from 2000 per day in 1950 to 2500 per day in 2001.
31. About 15% of North American farmers are cutting back on chemicals and adopting alternative farming practices that are both economically and environmentally beneficial.
32. Average marine catch worldwide increased 400% from 1950 to 1990 but has been flat since then.
33. In the year 2000, India reached a population of 1 billion.
34. Waterlogging and salinity are lowering productivity of one quarter of the world's irrigated cropland.
35. Each year, farmers lose an estimated 24 billion tons of topsoil from their cropland in excess of new soil formation.
36. Many widely used pesticides and herbicides are toxic. The runoff of these chemicals can contaminate groundwater and endanger wildlife.
37. Enough grain is currently grown worldwide to feed six billion people on a vegetarian diet.