

# Cattle Farmers & Ranchers Fighting Hunger | Fact Sheet



It's easy to think that in the land of the plenty, everyone has consistent access to high-quality, nourishing food. That's sadly not the case. Today, the U.S. population is more than 310 million people<sup>1</sup> and is expected to reach 458 million people by 2050,<sup>2</sup> —meaning we need to produce more food in order to meet the needs of a growing population.

## What is food security?

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), food security includes at a minimum:

- The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods.
- Assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).<sup>3</sup>

Food insecurity is a household-level economic and social condition of limited access to food, while hunger is an individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity.

In 2009:<sup>4</sup>

- 50.2 million Americans lived in food insecure households, including 17.2 million children.
- 14.7% percent of households (17.4 million households) were food insecure at some point during the year. The 2008 and 2009 levels of food insecurity are the highest recorded since national monitoring of food security began in 1995.
- Regionally, the food insecurity rate was highest in the South (15.9 percent) and West (15.5 percent), intermediate in the Midwest (13.9 percent) and lowest in the Northeast (12.2 percent).

## What we're doing about it

**America's cattle farmers and ranchers are committed to:**

Making today's practices for raising beef more efficient to help ensure we can feed a growing population.

- The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) projects that in 50 years, the world population will need 100 percent more food. Seventy percent of this food must come from efficiency-improving technology.<sup>5</sup>
- Thanks to modern production practices, each U.S. farmer today produces food and fiber annually to feed 155 people in the United States and abroad, compared to 19 people in 1940.<sup>6</sup>

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Using fewer natural resources to provide a growing population with an affordable supply of great tasting, nutritious beef.

- The U.S. supplies 25 percent of the world's beef with 10 percent of the world's cattle.
- Each pound of beef produced today, compared to 1977, uses<sup>7</sup>:
  - 30 percent less land
  - 14 percent less water
  - 9 percent less fossil fuel energy
  - 18 percent decrease in total carbon emissions (methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide)
- Yet each serving of beef provides 10 essential nutrients, including protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins.
- Iron and zinc deficiencies are some of the most common deficiencies worldwide and beef is a good source of both of these important nutrients.

Working in our local communities to support the economy and help feed the hungry in our own backyard.

- Raising cattle for beef represents the largest single segment of American agriculture, keeping millions of people employed at a time when our country needs it most.
- Farmers and ranchers around the country work with their local food banks to donate beef, food, money or volunteer. The "Beef Counts" program in Idaho and Washington has brought together the beef industry to help feed the local hungry. In November 2010, a group of farmers and ranchers in Missouri collected more than 15,000 pounds of food to benefit local families. Other similar campaigns have done the same.
- According to a recent survey, about half of cattlemen (47%) contribute \$500 or more and 32% contribute more than \$1,000 annual to local and national charities.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Population Clock, <http://www.census.gov/>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 National Population Projections, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/analytical-document09.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Food Security in the United States: Measuring Household Food Security", <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/measurement.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> USDA.Mark Nord, M. Andrews, S. Carlson. Household Food Security in the United States, 2009. [http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/stats\\_graphs.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/stats_graphs.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Green, R. et al. January 2005. "Farming and the Fate of Wild Nature." Science 307.5709: 550-555; and Tilman, D. et al. August 2002. "Agricultural sustainability and intensive production practices." Nature 418.6898: 671-677.

"World Agriculture: toward 2015/2030." 2002. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome. Accessed 12/8/08. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/004/y3557e/y3557e.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> American Farm Bureau Federation's "Food & Farm Facts" book, 2009, <http://www.fb.org/index.php?fuseaction=yourag.facts>

<sup>7</sup> J.L. Capper, Comparing the Environmental Impact Of The U.S. Beef Industry in 1977 to 2007. <http://wsutoday.wsu.edu/pages/publications.asp?Action=Detail&PublicationID=20666&TypeID=1>

<sup>8</sup> Profile of U.S. Cattlemen, conducted July 2010.

