

Extract: The Manifesto on Climate Change and the Future of Food Security

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Abstract

The Manifesto on Climate Change and the Future of Food Security of the International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture is an agro-ecological response to the challenges posed by climate change to the future of the planet's food security, based on mitigation, adaptation, and equity. Despite the fact that the current industrial agriculture and food system is a major contributor of CO₂ emissions, discussions on the relationship between food and agriculture systems to climate and energy were not on the agenda of the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali. The Manifesto is in part also a call to ensure that food systems are an integral part of the climate and energy discussions in the post-Bali climate negotiations. The document posits nine precepts around which these and other negotiations should be based, recognizing that ecological organic agriculture is a vital solution for mitigating climate change and for ensuring food security for all

The manifesto calls attention to those false agricultural solutions that are being promoted in the name of "clean" or "green" energy - namely genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and large-scale production of agrofuels. Most importantly, it demonstrates that ecological organic food systems are a real solution to current climate concerns in terms of mitigation and adaptation and an energy transition to a post-fossil fuel era. Industrial agrofuels are responsible for perverse subsidies to non-sustainable agriculture, are causing rising food prices due to the rapid conversion from growing food crops to growing agrofuels, and are further aggravating the problem of climate change as rainforests are being destroyed to be replaced with soy, palm oil, and sugar cane plantations.

Today's centralized, fossil fuel-driven food and agriculture system not only contributes to climate change (also because of the energy intensive and long distant transport systems and huge emissions of CO₂ that go hand in hand with a globalized food system), but it is also more vulnerable to climate change because it is based on uniformity and monocultures, on centralized distribution systems, and is dependent on intensive energy and water inputs.

The Manifesto urges discussions within the global arena to shift away from the reductionist view of "zero carbon" or "no carbon" as though there is only fossil carbon, neglecting the living, renewable organic carbon that is in soil, plants, and animals. Biodiversity increases resilience to climate change by returning more carbon to the soil. Industrial, fossil fuel-driven agriculture is directly at odds not only with the ecological imperative but also with the timetable and reduced emission targets set by governments in international forums. The Manifesto sets out transition imperatives and proposes actions for mitigating and adapting to climate change and for ensuring food security for all.

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