

New Book Points to Food, Farming as Key to Improving Health, Environment, and Equality Worldwide

Published in collaboration with the Worldwatch Institute, the book will be available for free on Earth Day, Sunday April 22nd. Visit the Barilla think tank website at www.barillacfn.com

Worldwide, 30 percent of food is wasted, 1 billion people go to bed hungry each night while another 1 billion suffer from health problems related to obesity. Meanwhile, young people are increasingly disconnected from how their food is grown, making solutions to the global agricultural system – which contributes one third of global greenhouse gas emissions – seem even further out of reach.

In response to these problems, the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition (BCFN) is releasing a book, *Eating Planet*, highlighting the challenges facing today's food and agricultural system, as well as the myriad of benefits that reform could bring. As Earth Day approaches, it is important to appreciate the links between technology, culture, and agriculture, and how they can help alleviate hunger and poverty. *Eating Planet* will be downloadable for free on Earth Day, April 22, 2012 from the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition's website (<http://www.barillacfn.com>).

"Access to food is one of the first and most fundamental of all human rights," says Guido Barilla, Chairman of the Barilla Group. "Where food is lacking, it becomes impossible to live with dignity, and the rights to a healthy life and peaceful coexistence are undermined."

The Worldwatch Institute's Nourishing the Planet project, an evaluation of environmentally sustainable solutions to alleviate hunger and poverty, collaborated with the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition to produce the report. "The study's conclusions represent a major step toward ensuring that agriculture contributes to health, environmental sustainability, income generation, and food security," said Nourishing the Planet project director Danielle Nierenberg. "The ingredients will vary by country and region, but there are some key components that will lead to healthier food systems everywhere."

The report is divided into four sections: Food for All, Food for Sustainable Growth, Food for Health, and Food for Culture. Each of these sections ends with concrete recommendations, proposals, and actions that need to be taken to solve the global food crisis.

The book features contributions from leading international experts, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Shimon Peres, world renowned economist and Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti, philosopher and environmental activist Vandana Shiva and Carlo Petrini, founder of the International "Slow Food" Movement. It suggests specific reforms to the food and agricultural systems. These include:

- **Healthy eating and lifestyles:** In developing countries, where rising average incomes are affecting dietary choices, it is important to provide access to and education about healthy foods like fruits and vegetables before bad eating habits develop into deep-rooted cultural practices. Ensuring proper nutrition among infants and children can greatly improve overall health later in life. Among both children and adults, a balanced diet, coupled with an active lifestyle, can minimize the risks of overweight, obesity, tumors, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome.

The Mediterranean diet may represent the right path here. The Double Pyramid model developed by the Barilla Center links food to its environmental impact: those food items that nutritionists believe should be eaten more often (fruit, vegetables, bread, rice, pasta and legumes) are also those that have a lower impact on the environment. While the nutritional value of the Mediterranean diet has been recognized by the international scientific community for some time, the Double Pyramid now demonstrates that this model also contributes to protecting the environment.

- **Fair food prices:** To ensure that agriculture remains a viable and sustainable source of livelihood, farmers must be able to ask realistic prices for their products. In many countries, food prices are kept artificially low because they do not take into account the environmental impacts of producing food, the high medical costs associated with long-term unhealthy eating habits, the costs required to pay farmers and farmworkers a decent living wage plus benefits, and the billions of dollars in government subsidies that farmers receive to grow certain commodities. If farmers could charge real prices for the food they grow, consumers, especially in wealthy countries, would reconsider the impacts of their various food choices.
- **Transparent and responsible food trade.** To improve universal access to food, policymakers must address the lack of transparency and responsibility in the commercial exchange of food around the world. This means, for instance, ensuring that production of crops to be used as biofuels does not interfere with the cultivation of crops for food. The food system must encourage "sustainable well-being," or the idea that people's current well-being should not be achieved at the expense of the happiness or prosperity of future generations.

Eating Planet is a collaboration between BCFN and the Worldwatch Institute's Nourishing the Planet project, an evaluation of environmentally sustainable solutions to alleviate hunger and poverty. Worldwatch commends initiatives like these that are working to improve nutrition and draw awareness to the importance of food in everyday life. These and other efforts need more attention, more research, and more investment to help build a more just and sustainable food system. *Eating Planet* will be available for purchase on Amazon and iTunes starting April 26th. For more details and updates, please visit www.barillacfn.com/en.