

FSN FORUM - DISCUSSION TOPIC NO. 10 IN 2008

## ENERGY COMPETITION FOR FOOD CROPS

Dear all,

I'm Eltighani Elamin, from Sudan. I was promoted to full professor in March 2003, after a working period as a policy research economist with the Agricultural Economic & Policy Research Center since my graduation from WSU in production economic & agricultural finance.

The issue of **bio-fuel** is one of my research fields. It has been argued a lot despite its very short time of emergence. However, most debates have taken the dark side of this new technology on skyrocketing of food prices with their repercussions on human life. Let's look at the bright side of the bio-fuel technology, since knowledge, the by-products of human brain, is always manageable for the benefit of human kind. Having said that, could I look through these pro bio-fuel arguments:

1. **Diverting more agricultural land to bio-fuel could reverse the global demand of agricultural products from being inelastic to elastic.** Elastic demand of agricultural product means more demand for incremental decreases in farm product prices that in turns manifested in increased incomes of rural poor and implied poverty reduction for these communities who suffered much from income poverty. **Could it be argued that way?**
2. Increased bio-fuel should reduce the use of anti-environment energy and clean the environment for healthy life for our future generations; this fact could more than offset the transitory increases in food prices before global food consumption adjusts with bio-fuel technology via reconciliation of reduced consumption by affluent societies (the price of clean environment) and increased transshipment of food to needy people. **How far is this statement correct?**
3. The needy people mostly concentrated in Africa and the least developed countries should gradually go out of poverty by having more income from diverting more of their farm land to bio-fuel and eventually become rich enough to import food from developed countries. **Is it a new concept for revising the periphery theory?**
4. **Could the energy competition for food crops trigger a save return to traditional-forests, biodiversity and wildlife based food?** Aren't People in the ancient past used to live long and healthy life because they feed themselves directly from the nature?

I'd like to learn your opinions and insights on these issues. They are interesting and challenging to me as they take back agricultural economists to restoring their role in leading the global political economy, in all aspects from food, nutrition and health through environment to energy sectors. This topic should also be relevant to all groups who are concerned with food security.

Many thanks and best regards,

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