

AGRICULTURE: NUTRIENTS SUPPLIER FOR ALL THE WORLD'S PEOPLE

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Annually, malnutrition causes far more deaths globally than any other risk factor. At least 30 million deaths a year can be attributed to malnutrition including both overt nutrient deficiencies (e.g., deficiencies including Fe, Zn, I, various vitamins, essential amino acids and lipids, etc.) and diet related chronic diseases (e.g., cancer, stroke, heart disease, and diabetes). Malnutrition is the result of dysfunctional food systems that are dependent on agricultural systems to supply all the essential nutrients needed for healthy and productive lives throughout the year. Unfortunately, agriculture has never had an explicit goal of improving human health, and the nutrition and health communities have never used agriculture as a primary strategy to use in the fight to eliminate malnutrition in all its forms. Just investing in agriculture will not solve malnutrition. Investments must be directed at changing agriculture in ways that will assure adequate nutrient output of farming systems to meet all human nutritional and health needs. Thus, there is an urgent necessity to closely link agricultural production to health and nutrition goals if we are to find sustainable solutions to the scourge of malnutrition worldwide.