The Increasing World Population: A Call for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovation

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According to the United Nations, the world’s population hit seven billion on October 31, 2011. The United Nations is projecting the world population to reach 9.3 billion by 2050. The new population landmark set off alarms in governments and organizations around the world. Most of the growth will occur in the poorest and least developed regions of the world, which already must work to resolve issues related to shortages of quality food, soil, air and water. Many people living in these countries also lack access to education, healthcare and global political capital.

More developed countries face many of the same issues in a different way. Agriculture has been so successful that many people living in the developed world enjoy a high degree of food security, but are separated from the growth and production processes. Consumers, in places like the United States, have become accustomed to buying whatever they need or want at a low price. Many consumers see only finished products in attractive wrapping on their shelves. For these people, it is difficult to understand the role that agriculture plays in their daily lives. It is also difficult for many people to understand the relationships between high consumption and environmental and political stability.

Each additional person added to the world’s growing population consumes food and natural resources. They also consume energy and produce waste. How will we continue to feed the growing population? What are the social and economic implications of landmark growth, and what will this all mean to our natural resource base?

Nebraska sits in a unique place with this new population landmark and predictions of explosive future growth. As a leader in agriculture, the Big Red state is emerging as a major player in the world’s future - even more so now than in the past.

Agriculture will experience new challenges and opportunities related to population growth. The expectation of increased productivity with less land and water is a global challenge. Further, increasing agricultural productivity is only one part of the equation. How is the world going to deal with increases in consumption of natural resources and the output...
Entrepreneurial leaders must create unique organizational and community cultures characterized by innovation in this era of explosive population growth and uncertainty. This is especially true in the areas of food security and social stability. Feeding the world will require leaders around the world to collaborate and leverage the talents of individuals while also cultivating continuous innovation.

Additional Resources and Reading:


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