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Lincoln South Rotary Program, February 2010 [Lincoln, Nebraska, USA]: Global Food Security--INTSORMIL

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PROGRAM

Our own Short Heinrichs spoke to the club on Friday about Global Food Security. What is food security? The availability of food and access to it. Many countries have food available but the population has no access to it. Short gave the group some sobering statistics regarding hunger in the world. 947 million people in the world are undernourished. 146 billion kids under 5 are under weight. 1 in 7 people are hungry and 1 in 6 people do not have safe drinking water. 10 million kids die each year from hunger related causes. The Asia/Pacific area is the number one region in the world for undernourished population. The Sub/Sahara region in Africa is #2.

Hunger causes more problems than just starvation and famine. Those who are undernourished have all kinds of other problems such as vitamin deficiency, stunted growth, weakness and heightened susceptibility to illness to name a few. The number one cause of hunger is poverty with economic factors and political stability having a significant impact as well. Political corruption makes it very difficult to give aid to countries as the food usually does not get to

the people who need it. Other factors which cause hunger are low & unpredictable rainfall, natural disasters, lack of agricultural research and technology and lack of strategies to transfer technology to local farmers.



Short is part of the International Sorghum and Millet

Program (INTSOMIL) through the University. The program works with local governments and universities in malnourished countries to teach farmers how to not only grow varieties of sorghum and millet but to increase stability & yield through plant breeding, and soil and water management. The program includes teaching the farmers harvesting, threshing and storage methods and helping link the producers with the market. Some of the results include, increased food supply, increase in farm income for local farmers, improved economic activity and improved food security for the region. Currently the program is located in Eastern, Western and Southern Africa and Central America.

The underlying premise of such programs is if you can feed yourself, why not teach the poor and malnourished how to feed themselves so you don't have to continue to feed them. Malnourished countries don't need loaves of bread from charities but need to be taught how to make the loaves of bread themselves.