

less cropland and producing less silt and pesticide runoff than at present, thus leaving more land for nature.¹³ He thought ten billion was a 'reasonable' forecast for world population in 2050 but that it might actually be lower. A more recent U.N. forecast is for nine billion in 2050.

In short, the world can feed its people and it can do this without pressing against the limits of agricultural resources or "running down" the natural environment...

The population controllers produce incessant propaganda to persuade us that our human numbers are devastating the planet and to induce us to put up with controls that we would not otherwise endure...

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ENDNOTES

1. Project book for the exhibition "Population: The Problem Is Us": A Book of Suggestions for Implementing the Exhibition in Your Own Institution" (Washington, DC: The Smithsonian Institution, undated, circulated in the late 1970s), 9.
2. Ibid., 20, 23.
3. Ibid, 51.
4. Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 177, 40, 78.
5. <http://www.npg.org>

6. "Food Requirements and Population Growth," World Food Summit Technical Background Documents 1-05, Vol.1, (FAO, 1996), 6.
7. Ibid., 17.
8. "Food and population: FAO looks ahead," *FAO News Highlights*.
9. Ibid.
10. Roger Revelle, The Resources Available for Agriculture," *Scientific American*, Vol. 235, No.3, 168-177; see also *FAO Production Yearbook*, various issues.
11. Dennis T. Avery, "Why Greens Should Love Pesticides," *The Wall Street Journal*, 12 Aug 1999, A-22.
12. Donald O. Mitchell and Merlinda D. Ingeo, *The World Food Outlook*. Washington DC: The World Bank, International Economics Department, Nov 1993, 226.
13. Paul E. Waggoner, *How Much Land Can Ten Billion People Spare for Nature?* (Ames, Iowa: Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, Feb 1994).

["Population Myths", by Jacqueline Kasun, Population Research Institute Review, Mar-Apr 02]

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Pamphlet 480

Population Myths

Jacqueline Kasun

MYTH - The world is overpopulated!

...It is easy to believe that the world is overpopulated because human beings have always lived in crowded conditions and do so at the present time. We do so not because of lack of space on the planet but because of the need to work together, to buy and sell, to give and receive goods and services from one another. Our cities and towns have always thronged with people and traffic – horses, donkeys, and camels in ages past, motor vehicles today.

All the people of the world could move into the state of Texas and form a giant city with about the same population density as some large cities today (6 billion population divided by 262,000 square miles of land in Texas equals about 23,000 per sq mile).

Because we crowd together and because the earth is large relative to our needs, we leave most of it unoccupied. Human beings actually use no more than one to three percent of the land area of the earth for their urban areas, roads, railroads, and airports, according to experts such as Julian Simon and others. All of the people of the world could move into the state of Texas and form a giant city with about the same population density as some large cities today (6 billion population divided by 262,000 square miles of land in Texas equals about 23,000 per square mile). Inner London contains 21,000 per square mile and Paris has

50,000, according to *Encyclopedia Britannica* online.

There was indeed a sudden spurt in world population growth during the 1960s and 1970s. It was the result of an abrupt decline in the world death rate due to the discovery of antibiotics and improved sanitation. The birth rate was actually declining quite markedly but was still greater than the death rate. That relationship is now changing: death rates are now rising in many countries as populations grow, and birth rates have declined below death rates in many countries.

According to the UN Population Division, 44 percent of the world's population now lives in countries where birth rates are too low...The United States is one of these countries. Our birth rate fell from 24.3 per thousand population in 1950-55 to 14.6 in 1998. Worldwide, the average woman today bears fewer than three children in her lifetime. This is also the average for Asia and Latin America. In Europe and Japan the one-child family is standard. If present trends continue, there will be 100 million fewer people in Europe fifty years from now (than there are today) and 21 million fewer in Japan...

MYTH – There is not enough food to feed all the people!

...World food population has increased considerably faster than population in recent decades. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced in 1996: "Globally food supplies have more than doubled in the last 40 years.⁶...at a global level, there is probably no obstacle to food

production rising to meet demand.⁷" In July 2000 the FAO announced: "...remarkable progress has been made over the last three decades towards feeding the world...In developing countries...the proportion of the population living in a chronic state of undernourishment was cut in half...FAO anticipates that this progress will continue.⁸"

On a per capita basis, food availability has increased remarkably, according to FAO:

Calories Consumed Per Person Per Day

	1964/1966	1995-1997
World	2357	2761
Industrial countries	2945	3374
Developing countries	2053	2626

[Source: *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Agriculture: Towards 2015/30, Technical Interim Report, Apr 2000, p.23*]

These figures may be compared with the commonly accepted standard of 2500 calories per person per day for an adequate diet. And in 2/2002, the FAO carried an article on its website about "Obesity in Developing Countries"!

But Hunger Still Exists

Does this mean that hunger has been eradicated on earth? No. In war-torn lands and in places where governments exploit and abuse their peoples, such as sub-Saharan Africa and North Korea, hunger is a stark reality. But it does mean the world can feed its people and hunger is not the result of a lack of food or food-producing capability.

Can the earth feed coming generations? On this point the FAO, which has never been known for its optimism, answers "yes".⁹ In fact, farmers use less than half of the earth's arable land and only a fraction of the water available for irrigation.¹⁰ As Dennis T. Avery, director of the Center for Global Food Issues of the Hudson Institute, has noted, "We're currently feeding more than twice as many people as lived in 1950, and doing it from essentially the same...land area that we farmed in 1950." This is the result of higher crop yields. He says, "Higher crop yields have saved more than 15 million square miles of wildlife habitat from being plowed for low-yield traditional farming."¹¹

The 1993 two senior economists at the World Bank, which was at the time still promoting gloom about food and population, produced a document called the World Food Outlook, which announced:

...crop yields continue to increase faster than population.

...This does not mean that all people have adequate diets but that diets for most...have improved dramatically in recent years and...should continue to improve.

...Population growth rates are slowing.
...food prices fell by 78 percent from 1950 to 1992 in constant [terms].¹² Falling prices, of course, are a sign of an increase in supply relative to the demand.

Continuing the optimistic forecasts by experts, in 1994 Paul E. Waggoner of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station concluded that farmers can "raise more crop per plot" and thus actually feed ten billion people by using