

Good News, Bad News-Where Do We Stand?

Student Activity 15

Statements

1. Some countries are paying their farmers not to produce food.
2. Fifty-one nations are more than three times as crowded as the United States.
3. Much potentially arable land must be irrigated.
4. Tropical land receives greater solar radiation and multiple crops could be raised each year on this land.
5. The soil in many tropical areas is very poor and erodes easily.
6. Infant death rates are dropping in almost every country in the world.
7. Most nations of the world now have family planning programs.
8. Many of the new high-yield varieties of grains have lower protein content than pre-World War II varieties.
9. Research is now concentrating on developing and testing grain varieties with higher protein content as well as possible additives to enrich the present varieties.
10. One out of every seven people worldwide do not have enough food to sustain a normal, active life.
11. Life expectancy has increased in most parts of the world.
12. There are more hungry mouths in the world today than ever before in history.
13. The use of improved seed lines, water control, more fertilizer, and disease and pest controls have together brought about sharp increases in grain production around the world.
14. The United States has less than five percent of the world's people and consumes almost 30 percent of the world's resources.
15. A map of the cultivated land on our planet shows the Eastern and Central United States, Europe, the Russian plains, India and China to be the major cropland areas; the most adequate soils, by far, are those of the American Midwest.
16. Most countries, including the United States, are running out of land that can be converted to cropland.
17. Land not under cultivation will require immense inputs of money for clearing, irrigation, and fertilization to make it productive.
18. Much productive land is diverted to non-nutritive crops such as tobacco and coffee.
19. The food that is annually lost in India to pests, poor storage and bad transportation could feed 50 million persons.
20. Less than five percent of the soils of the tropics are potentially fertile cropland.
21. Worldwide usage of fertilizers began to decline in 1989.
22. There's a booming trade in the United States in vegetarian and low-meat cookbooks.
23. It takes 400 billion dollars to build up an inch of topsoil.
24. If Americans reduced their intake of beef by 10 percent, 100 million people could be fed using the land, water and energy that would have been used for livestock feed.
25. 70 percent of U.S. grain production is fed to livestock.

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26. From 1950 to 1990, world grain production nearly tripled.
27. Between 1990 and 1996, the grain harvest per person dropped 10 percent.
28. In China between 1987 and 1992, 60 percent of farmland was returned to forest and pasture.
29. Cropland expansion will most likely come at the expense of rangeland, forests, wetlands and other areas that are both economically important and ecologically fragile.
30. Average global grain consumption per person, per year is 300 kilograms. In the United States, it is 800 kilograms.
31. 21 percent of U.S. irrigated cropland is being watered by drawing down underground aquifers.
32. Some U.S. farmers are cutting back on chemicals and adopting alternative farming practices that are both economically and environmentally beneficial.
33. The total annual marine catch has remained constant since 1988.
34. India more than tripled its grain harvest between 1965 and 1983. Since then grain production has not increased.
35. By the year 2000, India is expected to have approximately one billion inhabitants.
36. Waterlogging and salinity are lowering productivity of one-fifth of the world's irrigated cropland.
37. Each year, the world's farmers lose an estimated 24 billion tons of topsoil from their cropland in excess of new soil formation.
38. Many widely used pesticides and herbicides are toxic. The runoff of these chemicals can contaminate groundwater and endanger wildlife.
39. Cropland lost to urban growth on the Indonesian island of Java in 1994 could grow rice for 300,000 people.
40. 40,000 people die each day due to hunger or hunger-related causes.