

Report: Global agriculture productivity declines

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For the fourth year in a row, global agricultural productivity has not kept pace with our world's food demands. Even in more stable markets, farmers are filled with anxiety about the latest trend in trade protectionism.

That's according to the [2017 Global Agricultural Productivity Report](#) released Wednesday. The study was funded by the Global Harvest Initiative, which is made up of private sector companies like DuPont, Farmland Partners, John Deere, Monsanto and Smithfield Foods. It offers a broad ranging look at the challenges facing agriculture around the world, and took snapshot looks at the United States, India, Kenya, Vietnam and Colombia.

"For the fourth straight year, global agricultural productivity growth is not accelerating quickly enough to sustainably meet the demands of our growing world," Margaret Zeigler, executive director of the institute, said in the report. "Perhaps most troubling is the continued decline of agricultural productivity growth in low-income countries."

The United States produces plenty of food. In fact, by 2030, North America is expected to meet 190 percent of its food demand. But members of the agriculture world are worried that "a new era of trade protectionism has sent a chill through agricultural producers who fear they will lose access to traditional trade partners or fail to access new markets at a time when prices are low and farmers are struggling," the report said.

In Africa, the problems revolve around not producing enough food. The report estimated that at current growth rates, "sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) will meet only 8 percent of its food demand through productivity. This is almost 50 percent lower than the 2014 projection of 15 percent." The report also noted that in Africa "50 percent of its vegetable oils, 35 percent of its poultry meat and 23 percent of its sugar requirements are imported."

The report's outlook for Africa was grim, saying that African nations will not meet their targets for reducing hunger, malnutrition and poverty without a huge increase in productivity.

The industry-funded institute had different recommendations for different countries, but the recommendations included how agribusinesses, retailers and policymakers can support sustainable agriculture.

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