

**For the Case of Local
Food: Wheat Shortage
Looms in America**

Compiled with writings from Kelley Weston and Ben Gisin - *Touch the Soil*

Historically, countries around the world have stored food staples such as grains when production was greater than that which was consumed or exported. These stores are intended to be used in times of need, for funds through exportation or for consumption. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case and this scenario is unfolding. For the last 40 years large corporations colluding with the government and using tax dollars to subsidize their growth has driven most farmers out of the market. The explosion in demand was forecast as early as the 1970's as an outgrowth of population growth and development in formerly underdeveloped countries such as India and China.

The lack of foresight and preparedness on the part of big government and big business for this looming food crises means that food security will become the responsibility of individuals and their communities. While the local and community foods movement is not prepared to provide the volume of food that cracks in the industrial food system may precipitate, it is something to keep in mind as how to best serve this growing need.

In a global market, with much of the grain trade controlled by private companies there appears to be no reason why they will have to do anything but sell to the highest bidder. It is no different than oil in that respect. The high prices will also increase pressure to release marginal land and land now in conservation seeding programs into production, despite the financial penalties involved accelerating erosion and carbon release and increasing global warming. We should also not forget that a large percentage of grain is used to feed animals and it is the increase in meat

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consumption as wealth increases that are driving much of this shortfall. A farming boom may very well be a double edged sword allowing already wealthy and powerful producers to increase consolidation.

As the 2008 farming season unfolds, there has never been so much competition among major commodity crops for a limited amount of acres. The risks of one or several food crops being shorted in this competition has never been greater. Ben Gisin of Touch the Soil believes that "it is safe to say that never before have global food experts been so hopeful of a successful farming season as the one coming up for 2008"

It is examples such as this that we see the pressing need for creating local food systems such as ours in South Central Idaho. The stronger we can make our local food economies and providing support for our producers, the better off we'll be.

You can read more from Ben Gisin and Paul Krugman on this topic with a link to our website at www.idahosbounty.org.

Idaho's Bounty believes that we must all work together on the local solutions to these global issues. Thanks for supporting our local food shed and systems!



Imagine ...

- + Knowing where your food comes from, who is producing it, and their ethics and farming practices
- + Working in support of the health of your local community food shed where energy stays local and supports our rural economy

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