

# Foreword



Rick Reinhard

**M**My mother grew up on a farm in Nebraska. She had to leave home when she was 16, because her family could no longer afford to feed her. Times were tough for farmers, and her father was ill. She got a job in Lincoln as a live-in helper and sent part of her earnings home to help her family. Mom never got to go to college.

My father came from a nearby small town. He and my mother worked hard together to advance his education and career, and then to give me and my three sisters a strong start in life. I still have lots of family ties to rural Nebraska.

Most people in the United States now live in cities, but many urban people, like me, have rural roots. We know from our own family's experience about both the strong values and economic struggles of rural America. Poverty and food insecurity are more widespread in rural than in urban areas.

*Healthy Food, Farms and Families* focuses on how we can address the hunger and poverty in rural America. Farm and rural people in our country are hard-working, resourceful and community-minded. But our current farm policies do

little to encourage their entrepreneurial spirit or give a boost to the rural people who most need help.

The current farm bill provides large payments to some farmers, but does little to help small-scale farmers and other rural families of modest means.

The current U.S. farm bill also has a negative impact on rural communities in developing countries. Three-quarters of the world's hungry people live in rural areas of developing countries, and some of them could increase their earnings if they did not have to compete with subsidized crops from the United States and other industrialized countries. More could work their way out of poverty if the industrialized countries fully opened their markets to agricultural exports from developing countries.

Trade is important to progress against hunger and poverty in the developing world. When I recently visited Uganda, most of the farm families I visited were producing crops for export as well as crops for their own consumption. The U.S. Agency for International Development has helped Uganda expand its production and export of vanilla. As I visited farm families who were growing vanilla beans, I saw well-fed children and other clear signs of economic progress—a new cow in the yard, for example.

African leaders know that their countries need effective development assistance, but most African leaders are even more interested in trade justice—an opportunity to sell their countries'

products, mainly agricultural, freely and fairly in world markets.

Progress for poor people will benefit the whole world. This report includes new data from the International Food Policy Research Institute. They demonstrate that economic growth in Africa and poor Asian countries will benefit U.S. farmers.

Bread for the World is planning a major campaign in 2007 to push for food and farm policies that are better for rural America and better for hungry and poor people in our country and around the world. The campaign will be called *Seeds of Change: Help Farmers. End Hunger*. You can find out more about it and how you can get involved at [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org).



Rev. David Beckmann  
*President, Bread for the World and  
Bread for the World Institute*