



Extreme Weather Reports Taking Huge Toll On Global Food Production

An increase in the prevalence of extreme weather events due to global warming will seriously effect global food production worldwide, climate and agricultural experts are increasingly warning.

“Climate change threatens to make large areas of the planet unsuitable for human habitation and for adequate levels of food production” writes Ervin Lazlo in the book “Quantum Shift In the Global Brain”

Very few countries are still food self-sufficient – and the internationally available food reserves are shrinking”

In the past few months, a drought has devastated the Russian wheat harvest, floods have destroyed vast stretches of Pakistan farmland, and a heat wave led to the death of 2,000 cattle in Kansas. As greenhouse gas emissions continue and the planet keeps warming, climatologists are predicting “more and more hot extremes and worse unprecedented extremes and that’s what we are seeing”. Said Neville Nicholls of Monash University, Australia.

The impact of such disasters has implications far beyond the specific croplands affected. Russia’s decision to ban exports of its shrunken wheat crop, for example, has caused alarm in wheat-importing countries such as Egypt. Analysts worry about a return to the food riots of 2007 and 2008, when rising food prices led to supply crises in poor countries.

“Over the whole globe all of these changes in climate ...are going to cause some real ripples in our capabilities of producing food,” said Jerry Hatfield of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agriculture Research Service.

Crop failures are also expected to hit rice fields in the near future.

“That could start showing up in the next decade or so, because we’re getting these heating peaks already,” said Peter Timmer of the non-profit Center for Global Development.

Beyond the next few years, researchers admit that they have no idea what our agricultural future will look like.

“In the longer term, all bets are off which crops can or can’t grow,” said Jay Gullede, the senior scientist at the Pew Center for Global Climate Change in Washington. The effects of extreme weather on crops are only beginning to be understood. Many had projected that climate change’s rising global temperatures would help countries in the North produce more food.

For decades scientists studied the effect of global warming on crops by simply raising temperatures and carbon dioxide levels in greenhouses. They did not take into account the effects of floods and droughts, or reduced yields that result from higher temperatures.

“There’s been a severe failing of the scientific community. on that,” said Gullede. “Climate science proceeded amazingly over that period, but this topic was handled poorly.”

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