

# **How modern agriculture can combat food insecurity**



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By Giulia Di Tommaso, President & CEO, CropLife International

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The COVID-19 crisis reminds us of the importance of fighting food insecurity. Food travels through a complex supply chain linking farmers to consumers, and the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how fragile that process can be. From food waste and loss to empty store shelves, the disruptions to the supply chain caused by the pandemic are visible and highly impactful to people worldwide.

Unfortunately, food insecurity is nothing new. Despite significant progress in recent decades, today, more than [820 million people regularly go to bed hungry](#). Of these, about [135 million suffer from acute hunger](#) largely due to man-made conflicts, climate change and economic downturns. The COVID-19 pandemic could double that number, putting an additional 130 million people at risk of suffering acute hunger by the end of 2020.

Over the past decade, the plant science sector has developed innovations that support sustainable agriculture and food systems transformation. Plant science has contributed positively to increasing yields and preventing hunger. By increasing crop productivity, biotech crops protected 183 million hectares of forests and natural habitats from being brought under cultivation, helped capture 27 billion kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub>, and reduced pesticide applications by 8%.

// Modern agriculture and sustainable systems can help reduce food loss and waste, while also preserving water, ensuring sustainable use of resources, and providing climate change solutions. //



## DIALOGUES

In the recent pandemic, the plant science industry has made new resources available so farmers can maintain physical distancing and public health requirements while caring for their crops. We ensured uninterrupted access to crop protection products and improved seeds. Digital tools like satellite imagery for virtual field inspections, and apps that calculate pest and disease pressures, as well as digital consulting with technology providers, have also been made available to farmers, the silent heroes, so they can choose and rely on digital tools so they can continue to maintain their crops through the pandemic.

We will continue to stand by farmers and work together with the value chain to meet the immense challenges during and after the COVID-19 crisis whilst continuing to address longer-term issues such as climate change, the growing world population and the need to protect precious biodiversity and natural resources.

**Modern agriculture and sustainable systems can help reduce food loss and waste, while also preserving water, ensuring sustainable use of resources, and providing climate change solutions.**

Only by working together can we face the post-COVID environment, address the potential for similar situations in the future, and win the battle to feed the world and support a healthy planet, ensuring that no one is left behind.



**Giulia Di Tommaso is President and CEO of CropLife International.** She has over 30 years of global career including senior executive roles at Unilever and as CCO & CSO with Ferrero. She was a strategic advisor to FAO on private sector partnership engagement and led international agreements on climate change, food loss & waste and smallholder farmers.

