

World Crisis In Agriculture

Today agriculture is in deep trouble.

It is facing a crisis which even now is affecting the cost and the quality of the food on our table.

It is easy to see that widespread disease and famine loom on the horizon, and in many places are already a fact, for the poor, “*have not*” areas of the world.

Few are aware that an agricultural crisis of equal, and possibly greater, magnitude is in prospect for that third of the world we call the “*have*” nations.

From the day we are born we need food, if we don’t get it we die.

It’s as simple as that.

But even if we do get food, many do still die prematurely, because of its low quality.

Regardless of whether we live in the under-fed, or over-fed part of the world, **millions of us die through under-nourishment through the lack of quality in our food.**

Both stem from a single cause, starvation!

One just happens to be more subtle and less obvious than the other.

What is the problem?

Why is humanity failing to supply themselves with enough food of sufficient quantity and quality?

Is it too many hungry mouths?

Too few acres under production of food?

Insufficient machines to produce the crops?

Not enough scientific knowledge?

The breaking of some simple law?

Ultimately, all our food comes directly or indirectly from the soil and more specifically, from the top few inches of soil known as topsoil.

This life-sustaining topsoil lies in a thin layer at on average depth of seven or eight inches over the face of the earth.

In some areas this topsoil may be as deep as two feet or more, but in many areas it is considerably less than seven inches. **It is this thin layer of earth that sustains all plant, animal and human life.**

This article seeks to explain how the misuse of the life-giving topsoil is the cause of the problems we find in agriculture today.

We see widespread disease in cattle, such as foot and mouth or mastitis that destroys cattle or depletes the quality of their output.

Plants fare no better.

The misplaced aura of the magic invested in “the green revolution” is wearing a bit thin.

The hybrid crops, on which it is dependent, may have opened a Pandora’s box of pestilence, famine and social disruption.

An article in ‘Science Journal’ [August 1970] admitted then that the estimated loss of crops to fungal pathogens was over one third of all crops produced.

Are there many causes for these multiple problems?

Or can they all be traced back to just one simple underlying fact?

Inspite of our knowledge explosion, especially in science and technology, it seems that humanity is still blind to the truth as to how we should feed ourselves.

As knowledge increases, you expect problems to decrease.

Never before have so much science and technology been applied to food production as today, yet never before have problems loomed so large over agriculture as a whole!

We must therefore conclude that there is **no** correlation between problem-solving and our knowledge explosion.

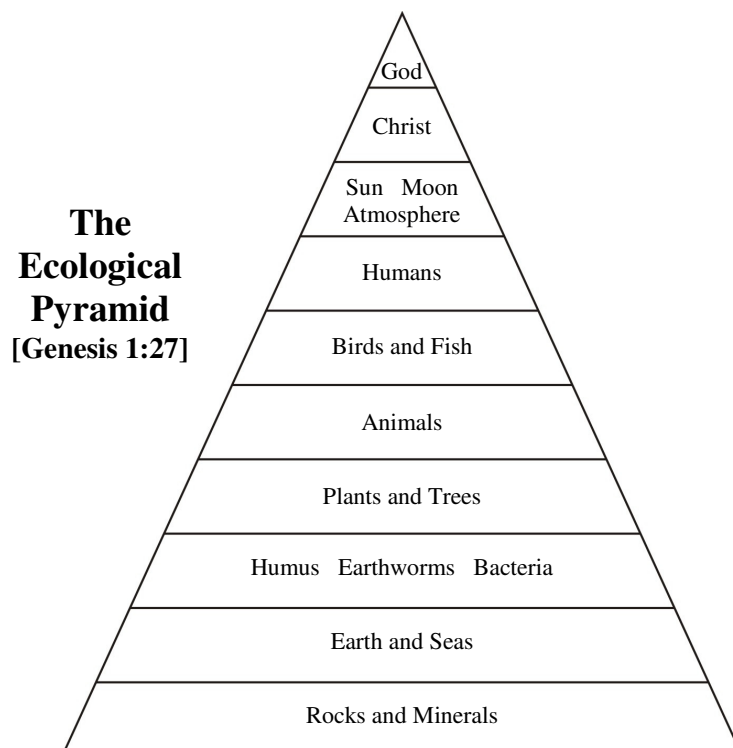
Science just does not have the answer for the world’s food producers.

Science seems unable to focus an ecological view of the environment that is now being destroyed.

Could it be that farmers and scientists alike, refuse to face responsibility for their own actions?

Our environment and its inter-dependent parts

There exists a tight inter-relationship between all major segments of our God-created environment.



Genesis 1:28 [King James] “*And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be **fruitful**, and **multiply**, and **replenish** the earth, and **subdue** it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*”

Humans are expected by our Creator God to exercise dominion over all the created earth, and we are to do this in several ways.

“*Fruitful*” – Hebrew “*pârâh*” meaning to cause to grow and increase.

“*Multiply*” – Hebrew “*râbâh*” cause to yield more.

“*Replenish*” – Hebrew “*mâlâ*” to gather a handful and to satisfy.

“*Subdue*” – Hebrew “*kâbash*” to bring into subjection – domesticate.

Genesis 2:15 [King James] “*And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to **dress it** and to **keep it**.*”

Our whole approach to this beautifully designed ecological system is bound up in two words.

“*Dress*” – Hebrew “*âbad*” to till, work for and serve.

“*Keep*” – Hebrew “*shâmar*” to hedge about, protect and preserve by watching over it.

The creation is for the service of humanity, but we should be bound to that creation in a grateful attitude of service, dedication and protection, just as parents should be towards their own children.

The more we serve our environment the more it will serve us as human beings, and glorify God its Creator.

Humanity’s plan for self-destruction

Instead of learning from daily disasters – humanity in effect is saying “*we have always had growing problems and disease, it is inevitable.*”

Then looks to science to solve the problems instead of the Creator God who originally created a perfect system for humanity to provide itself with quality food that will lead to healthy bodies.

Disease and problems in growing quality food are not inevitable.

The ecological pyramid can help us to understand ecology by appreciating the inter-dependence of each level.

Looking at this illustration closely, you can conclude that the entire structure contains only one non-essential unit – humans.

Take away any one of the other integral parts of this biotic pyramid and the entire physical system would collapse.

We never pause to reflect that humans could be removed and yet the environment would continue on without them.

Placing humans in this kind of perspective, it makes us think we ought to exercise a little caution and discretion as to how we use the environment which was created to be a great blessing for us by the Creator God.

Humanity appears to be bent on self-destruction, mainly to achieve their greedy ends, taking all they can out of the environment without giving anything back to keep it in its original balance.

Romans 8:7 [NIV] *“the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.”*

The normal human mind is rebellious, **not** wanting to submit to the laws that the Creator God has set in motion to bring humanity many blessings.

2 Corinthians 4:4 [NIV] *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*

Humanity is not alone and unaided in this self-destruction, Satan who is the one who controls society and is plotting and scheming with everything in his power to destroy humanity, [1 John 5:19 – NIV translation].

Because the ecological pyramid sustains humanity every level is being attacked by Satan, none have been overlooked.

Cleverly Satan is attacking what seems to be the most insignificant level, the soil.

What is the soil?

A fertile soil is 90% inorganic, under the microscope, even the finest of these rock particles, that is what they are, look like the smashed remains of a pile of broken glass bottles.

The other 10% [or thereabouts] is organic “waste” matter of vegetable and animal origin and ideally is in every stage of decomposition.

Ultimately it becomes what is called humus.

What are the facts about humus?

1) **It provides a buffering action against acidity, thereby retaining a favourable environment for earthworms and other organisms involved in organic decomposition.**

2) It preserves the essential “*crumb-structure*,” thus preventing soil compaction and also erosion by wind and water.

3) It aids water absorption, moisture retention, temperature control, drainage and the release of inorganic nutrients.

Quotation: ‘*Humus*,’ by Selman Waksman; page 414 [one of the world’s leading authorities on soil micro-biology]

“The importance of humus in human economy seldom receives sufficient emphasis. Suffice to say that it probably represents the most important source of human wealth on this planet.”

Another quote of a man knighted by a past British government for his work on organic agriculture.

‘*An Agricultural Testament*,’ by Sir Albert Howard; page 167:

“Nature has provided a marvellous piece of machinery for conferring disease-resistance on the crop. This machinery is only active in soil rich in humus; it is inactive or absent in infertile land and similar soils fertilised with chemicals.”

He was talking about the humble earthworm.

Elsewhere the same authority states, *“I have several times seen my oxen rubbing noses with foot-and-mouth cases. Nothing happened. The healthy well-fed animals reacted to this disease exactly as suitable varieties of crops, when properly grown, did to insect and fungus pests, no infection took place.”* ... *“Nothing was done in way of prevention beyond good farming methods and the building up of a fertile soil.”* [pages 162-163]

The organic 10% is the basic key to the ecological structure of the soil.

Without it, the earthworms and other organisms of decomposition disappear from the soil.

Without organic decomposition, soil texture is destroyed and plant nutrients become unavailable.

Without a balanced and continuous supply of nutrients, the entire plant kingdom is threatened with disease and starvation.

Without healthy plants, the herbivore of the animal kingdom and humans are threatened with disease and starvation.

Without a diet of healthy animals, carnivorous humans are doomed!

The collapse of our environment

Are not these the exact conditions facing humanity at this moment of time?

Yes, they certainly are and the cause is the same too.

A quote from ‘*The London Observer*,’ August 30th 1970:

“An official inquiry into the health of farmland soils has found that in parts of England and Wales the fertility and structure of the soil have broken down to dangerous proportions. In the most critical areas ... the deterioration has gone so far that arable farming will probably have to be abandoned. The survey reveals that the organic content of these heavy clay soils is often as low as three per cent.”

Do you see the fearful implications?

There are many ways in which our society can be destroyed, but one of them is by the simple and seemingly innocent device of lowering the organic content of the earth’s food-producing soil.

As this vital 10% of organic matter is removed from the soil, the ecological pyramid will collapse, this planet will then be agriculturally as dead and inert as the moon!

Humans miss the connection

Lack of humus is the key to the problems of food production!

Huge manmade deserts attest to the fact that every civilisation has depleted that vital organic content of the soil.

Today the agro-chemical industry is a lethal façade, hiding the falling humus levels in a smoke-screen of low quality, high production!

The fact that this produce in nutritional junk food, phases neither farmer or consumer.

Stealthily, soil destruction takes over!

On the other hand, God's Word, the Christian Bible, promises that this decline will be reversed, there will be at the Second Coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ a return to Garden of Eden conditions.

Ezekiel 36:33-36 [New King James] *“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.” Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it.’”*

At this future time the humus replacement will again assume its proper importance.

Obedience to this law will go far to eliminating soil destruction, manmade deserts and disease in all forms of life, [Isaiah 31:1-2; Isaiah 41:19-20; Isaiah 51:3].

Meanwhile, robbing soil of its organic 10% continues to undermine the entire ecological structure!

Any of us who have even the smallest of gardens can begin to build up the humus in it and then experience the sight and the taste of organic grown vegetables.

Looking forward when each family will have its own smallholding on which to grow healthy foods and rear healthy animals.

[Please download and study our other articles under the heading of ‘Agriculture and the Environment,’ also under the heading ‘The World Tomorrow’.]