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Future Trends: Climate Changes' Impact on Food Systems

Food systems and nutrition, both globally and domestically, are areas of public health that I think deeply about — especially in regards to future trends. Particularly because of climate change, which has been exponentially impacted by human industry, food systems will be under threat. There are already 47.3 million people in 2023 who are nutritionally deficient or food insecure across 54 countries as recorded by the World Food Programme, which is an issue that will be exacerbated unless there are adaptation measures in place to account for the changes climate change will bring on to food and nutrition (World Food Programme, 2023). Both undernutrition and overnutrition have health implications and alleviating those issues could also ignite social change, which is fascinating to me. Climate change leaves no part of the world untouched, which will alter which places of the world are best equipped to grow food. Whether it be less or more rainfall, more heat, or water sources that are depleted, the areas that are used to growing food will face changes to their environment that will then impact agriculture. Additionally, natural disasters like drought, hurricanes, extreme heat, and flooding, can destroy crops more abruptly and have been increasing with climate change. The nutritional components of food are also expected to decrease as our current food system depletes the soil (AdaptNSW, 2023).

Many of us see food as easily accessible and are not connected to the path it takes to grow; however, a potential crisis could occur if the system in which we get food isn't anticipating the impacts of climate change. In order to alleviate the impacts of nutritionally deficient food and disrupted food systems (as they will inevitably happen, especially with the lack of action to reduce carbon emissions) action plans need to be made by countries, regions, and cities. Particularly in the US, we are dependent on many other countries for products, so this would need to be a collaborative effort. The US has a history of exploitation, so justice needs to be at the heart of this discussion. On a broader scale, action needs to be taken to reduce carbon emissions in order to stabilize climate change.

References

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