

A photograph of two men in silhouette standing in a field at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and long shadows. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds. In the background, there are rolling hills and a few buildings, possibly a farm. The overall mood is contemplative and serious.

Let's talk about the weather!

Climate Change and Hunger



Why is Foodgrains Bank talking about climate change?

Canadian Foodgrains Bank's vision is a world without hunger.

Farmers have always faced climate variability. Floods, droughts, and erratic rainfall have long been leading causes of hunger.

Now, climate change is causing even more unpredictable weather.

If we're serious about ending hunger—and we are—we need to talk about climate change.

After all, there are real people who are affected by it.



Mary Beth Sanate (second from left) with her colleague (far left) and tribal farmers and leaders of Thingkeu village in Northeast India.

Mary Beth Sanate

For Mary Beth Sanate climate change means increased hunger for the people she works with in northeast India. “Within India it is the urban and rural poor—tribals, dalits and adivasi, those who depend on access to natural resources for their fragile livelihoods—that are more vulnerable,” she says.

Sanate works with a Foodgrains Bank partner on a project to increase food security in the region. She says: **“Climate change is a serious concern and requires urgent action.”**



The best available information is telling us there's cause for concern.

Higher temperatures

Increasingly unpredictable weather

Melting glaciers

More frequent droughts

Sea level rise

Spread of human and livestock diseases

More hunger

The World Food Programme predicts that by 2050, the number of people at risk of hunger is likely to be 10-20% more than it would be without climate change.

Greater flood damage

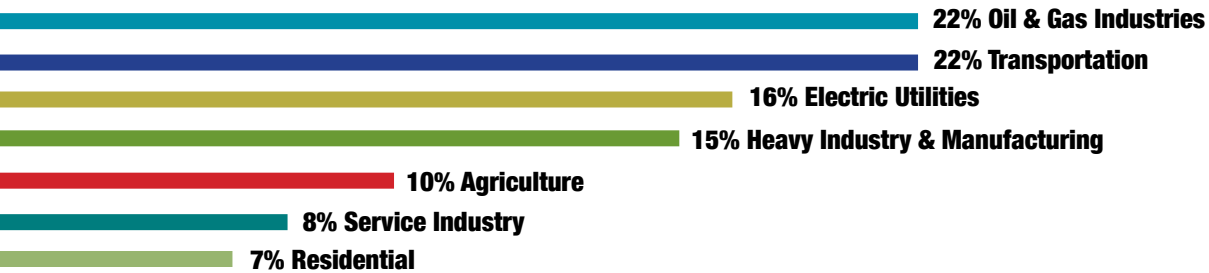
Are Canadian farmers being blamed for climate change?

Not at all. In fact, Canadian agriculture accounts for a relatively small percentage of the greenhouse gases believed to cause climate change. And these agricultural emissions are really shared by all of us who eat. These are emissions that help produce the essentials for life itself.

Of course, we all need to consider how to live more within our means when it comes to the earth's finite resources and the health of our planet. Canadian Foodgrains Bank encourages participation in public discussion and dialogue on climate change while acknowledging divergent views around this issue.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Canada by sector

Data: 2008, Climate Change Connection



“We are all involved in climate change—both urban and rural people. We are all challenged by this. I don’t think that Foodgrains Bank can avoid the issue. From what I sense and have read, the reality has hit us. It is here and it is now. It’s no longer just a theory.” — Ernie Wiens, Farmer, La Salle, MB



God spoke: “Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature, so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself...”
—Genesis 1:26

Photo credit: Aileen Del Rosario (FRR)

Is Foodgrains Bank becoming an environmental organization?

Our work on climate change is based on our mandate to end hunger, not on concern for the environment alone. Farmers everywhere depend on the environment—to produce food successfully we need to consider the health of land, water and air.

As a Christian response to hunger, Canadian Foodgrains Bank works with partners to deal with the impact of droughts, floods, or degraded environments on hunger. As good stewards, we are called to care for creation. This is a natural place of interaction for those who must deal with the issue of climate change. The result is a dialogue involving farmers in Canada, farmers in the global South, development workers, researchers, and other actors. A faithful response to hunger includes making this connection with environment.



Photo credit: Alison Ralph

“We often don’t see the global picture like Foodgrains Bank does—and how an issue like climate change affects how we work with overseas partners to end hunger.”

—Abe Krahn, Farmer, Rivers, MB (pictured at left)

What is Foodgrains Bank doing to address climate change?

Many of the projects we support on the ground—such as sand dams, irrigation schemes or conservation agriculture—are helping farmers adapt to changes in climate.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank is also advocating for the Canadian government to do its fair share to help developing countries adapt to climate change. We’re suggesting that the money our government gives to these international efforts should focus especially on small-scale farmers who are among those most likely to face increased hunger because of changes in climate.

We continue to speak with Canadians about the root causes of hunger, including climate change.

Wilson and Essie Mpofu

Wilson and Essie Mpofu are enthusiastic boosters of conservation farming. **“Conservation farming has improved our lives very much,”** says Wilson. He and Essie have long farmed a small plot of land in western Zimbabwe where there are more and more droughts.

In 2006, he and Essie joined a Foodgrains Bank-funded project that introduced conservation farming methods, including minimal soil disturbance, use of mulch to conserve moisture and improve soil fertility, and diversified crop rotations. Since then they have seen their yields increase dramatically. “We are very happy. It relieves me so much,” says Essie.



Photo credit: Ben Sutherland

Love God, love others, and remember the poor: this was the unwavering mandate of the early church more than two thousand years ago. And this is our solidly biblical motivation for caring about climate change today.

—Katherine Hayhoe and Andrew Farley, *A Climate for Change: Global Warming Facts*

Why seek public support for this issue?

Our public policy department works to influence government policies that affect hungry people. We recognize there are many causes of hunger that could be addressed, but to be effective we have to choose our issues carefully. So we ask two main questions. Is this an important issue for hungry people? Can we influence government policy?

Climate change meets both these criteria.

Changes in climate directly affect many of the people we work with. More than 75% of people who suffer chronic hunger live in rural areas in developing countries. Most of them are small-scale farmers. Their livelihoods are closely linked to the natural resource base, so changes in rainfall, temperature and declining yields will make them even more vulnerable to hunger.

At the same time, Canada is actively involved in international negotiations on how best to respond to climate change, including how to help developing countries. Right now there is a window of opportunity for us to influence Canadian policy on this issue. Support from the public, through writing letters or visiting Members of Parliament, for example, is critical in influencing policies to help meet the needs of hungry people.

What can be done?



Good question! With public support and actions from people in the Food Justice Network, Canadian Foodgrains Bank has successfully influenced policy decisions in the past, such as the untying of food aid and increasing aid for agriculture. We can do the same on the issue of climate change and hunger. Public support plays an essential role in this, and you can be part of this in several ways:

- Join our Food Justice Network – learn about specific actions that can be taken
- Learn more about climate change and hunger
- Talk openly about the issue of climate change with your community
- Pray for justice for hungry people in the world
- Financially support Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Visit www.foodgrainsbank.ca to join the Food Justice Network, learn more about climate change and hunger, and further support the work of Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

