



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Productivity & the environment focus of international conference

FEBRUARY 26, 2015: Debate over the sustainability of agriculture revolves, in part, around divergent beliefs about the implications of agricultural productivity growth for the environment. Yet understanding of how technological change and productivity growth in agriculture affect environmental outcomes is limited. The relationship of technological changes that drive agricultural productivity growth and the environment will be examined at a conference March 11-12, 2015, in Washington, D.C.

This international conference is a collaboration of Farm Foundation, NFP, Global Harvest Initiative (GHI) and USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). The conference begins at 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 11, in the First Floor Auditorium of the ERS offices, located at Patriot's Plaza 3, 355 E Street SW, Washington, D.C. Sessions will continue through Thursday, March 12.

It has long been recognized that technology-based tools that help increase agricultural productivity may have positive and negative impacts on the environment. Technologies that require more intensive use of fertilizer or chemical inputs, for example, may generate the potential for more pollution of water resources. Yet technological changes that increase crop yields may improve efficiency of nutrient and water use, while saving non-agricultural land from conversion to farmland.

In both developed and developing nations, understanding agricultural productivity becomes more critical as population growth and climate changes put greater stress on water, soil and ocean resources. The March 11-12 conference will examine the latest research work on productivity measurement, tradeoffs between agriculture and environmental outcomes, new sources of data for measuring and valuing environmental services, and public policy options. Identifying research gaps is another goal of the workshop. Review the complete workshop agenda [here](#).

The productivity conference is open to the public but registration is required as seating is limited. Register for the conference [HERE](#).

A related event is a Farm Foundation[®] Forum, which will be 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. EDT Wednesday, March 11 at the National Press Club, 529 14th Street NW, Washington, D.C. The topic for this two-hour discussion: *The Nexus of Technology, Agricultural Productivity and the Environment*. The Forum opens with short presentations followed by discussion. Stephen Polasky, Ph.D., University of Minnesota, will discuss the value of environmental services. Derek Byerlee, an independent researcher and former rural policy advisor at the World Bank, will examine the

constraints small-holder farmers face in increasing productivity while protecting the environment. Jerry Flint, Ph.D., DuPont/Pioneer, will provide a corporate perspective on sustainable agricultural intensification. Details on how to register to participate in person or via a live audiocast are available [here](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

[Mary Thompson](#), Farm Foundation, NFP

[Keith Fuglie](#), ERS

[Margaret Zeigler](#), Global Harvest Initiative

Farm Foundation, NFP serves as a catalyst for sound public policy by providing objective information to foster a deeper understanding of issues critical to the future of agriculture, food systems and rural communities. The Foundation does not lobby or advocate. An 82-year reputation for objectivity and deep professional networks with industry leaders, economists and the scientific and academic communities, allows the Foundation to bring together diverse stakeholders for discussion on economic and public policy issues. www.farmfoundation.org

USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) is charged with informing and enhancing public and private decision making on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural development. With more than 300 employees, ERS is a primary source of economic information and research in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. ERS staff disseminates economic information and research results through an array of outlets, including research reports, market analysis and outlook reports, economic briefs, staff analyses, and congressionally-mandated studies. www.ers.usda.gov

Global Harvest Initiative (GHI) is a private-sector voice for productivity growth throughout the agricultural value chain to sustainably meet the demands of a growing world. GHI believes the right policies can improve global food and nutrition security by accelerating agricultural productivity gains while conserving natural resources. Every year GHI releases its signature GAP Report®, an annual benchmark of the global rate of agricultural productivity. www.globalharvestinitiative.org