



FEEDING THE WORLD IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A Historical Analysis of Agriculture and Society

Christian Anton Smedshaug, with a Foreword by Niek Koning

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Description

Provides a comprehensive historical narrative of agricultural policy over the last two centuries, and promotes a holistic approach to the task of feeding the world in the 21st century.

Feeding the World in the 21st Century: A Historical Analysis of Agriculture and Society provides a historical understanding of agricultural development over the last two centuries. Characteristics of the period included the opening of the prairies in the late eighteenth century, the invention of industrial fertilizer and the tractor's displacement of the horse, leading to an abundance of food, and peace and prosperity in the world market. This situation continued until 2005, when prices rose in spite of increased production. Smedshaug gives a historical background of the current situation, while discussing the ultimate challenge of how to feed a world of 10 billion people. This challenge has to be met in the light of climate change, water shortage and not least the declining availability of fossil fuel.

This work represents an important step in the management of agriculture, for it relates the questions of food and farming directly to the farmers who have the continuing task of providing for the global population. Smedshaug's analysis underlines the need for every country to have the freedom to establish an agricultural policy adapted to the given national natural conditions, as well as the need to put the producer at the heart of the policy in such a way that all countries can reach their full potential in food production. This agricultural policy development must integrate both climate mitigation and adaptation, while also enabling the transition into a society operating on renewable energy. The task of essentially doubling food production and feeding the world may indeed be the ultimate challenge of the twenty-first century.

Readership: Farmers and farming organisations; those involved in regional and national agricultural policy; sustainable development organisations; students of Agriculture, Development and International Relations.

Contents

Foreword - Niek Koning; Chapter 1: Will Agriculture Succeed?; Chapter 2: Supply and Demand of Agricultural Produce; Chapter 3: Ideas of Agriculture, Trade and Society through Changing Times; Chapter 4: Agriculture and Development - What Do the History Tell?; Chapter 5: Specificities of Agriculture; Chapter 6: Lack of Food Supply; Chapter 7: What Made the Oversupply of Agricultural Products?; Chapter 8: Agriculture's Role in Development; Chapter 9: Development's Role in Agriculture; Chapter 10: Increased Agricultural Production in Africa; Chapter 11: International Agricultural Trade Policy after WWII; Chapter 12: Agricultural Policy for the 21st Century; Chapter 13: The Challenge of the 21st Century; Chapter 14: Literature; Index

About the Author

Christian Anton Smedshaug worked with agricultural policy as related to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture from 2001 to 2003. From 2003 onwards, he has worked with the Norwegian Farmers Union on issues of agriculture, trade and development in the political context of the EU and WTO. He was awarded a PhD from the Norwegian Agricultural University in 2000.

Niek Koning is currently Assistant Professor of the Agricultural Economics and Rural Policy Group at Wageningen University, the Netherlands, where his research topics include long-term evolution of the agri-food sector in developed countries, and agrarian institutions and politics.

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