



The Editor
The Times
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Dear Sir,

I take issue with your account of Professor John Beddington's speech on food security (Rush for biofuels threatens starvation on a global scale). How we deal with a large and increasingly affluent global population certainly requires much more attention than it currently receives but it is nonsense, and a serious distortion of Professor Beddington's presentation, to claim that demand for biofuels is 'threatening world food production and the lives of billions of people'.

Current production of biofuels uses around 1% of global land available for agriculture. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that by 2030 this might double – to 2%.

According to a report by the European Environment Agency published earlier this week (3 March), biofuels provided only 1.2% of the EU's fuel for transport in 2005. If biofuels are causing starvation, where are they being produced and where are they being used? Certainly not in Europe, and even less so in the UK.

There is a real danger that blaming biofuels will become a kneejerk reaction that stops us from dealing with the much larger issue of food and energy needs for the next 50 years.

Clare Wenner
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