

News Release



Bread for the World

Seeking Justice. Ending Hunger.

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Current U.S. Agricultural Subsidies Harmful to Rural Communities in our Nation and in the Developing World

Statement of Bread for the World President David Beckmann:

“The current system of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies depresses prices for poor farmers in developing countries and is not the best way to help struggling farmers in our own country. There is a direct connection between the current system of subsidies and the persistence of world hunger.”

The current policies, justified as necessary to protect domestic rural interest, are doing little to help the most vulnerable people in the U.S. Most of the money spent on rural America ends up in the pockets of large landholders and agribusinesses, doing little to help small and mid-sized family farms or struggling rural families.

It is time for the U.S. to significantly reduce agricultural subsidies by phasing out the trade distorting ones and capping those paid to large landholders and agribusinesses. The money saved should be redirected into rural development to help build strong and sustainable rural communities.

Of the 2,128,982 farms counted in the latest Census of Agriculture, only 33 percent received any government payments.

Seventy percent of subsidies go to 10 percent of the largest growers.

According to a USDA study, in 2001 “59 percent of government payments went to producers on farms with a net worth of \$600,000 or more.”

Bread for the World is a 54,000-member Christian citizens' movement against hunger. Founded in 1974, Bread for the World's members have lobbied Congress and the administration to bring about public policy changes that address the root causes of hunger and poverty in the United States and overseas. Bread for the World is a nonpartisan organization supported by 45 denominations and many theological perspectives. Please visit our Web site at <http://www.bread.org>.