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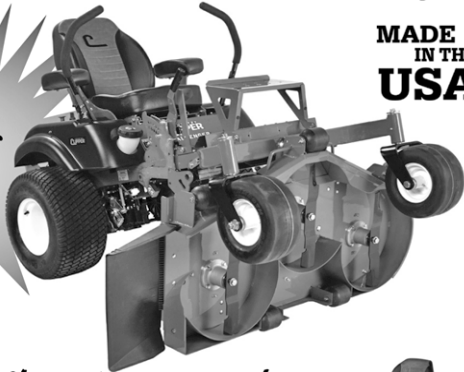
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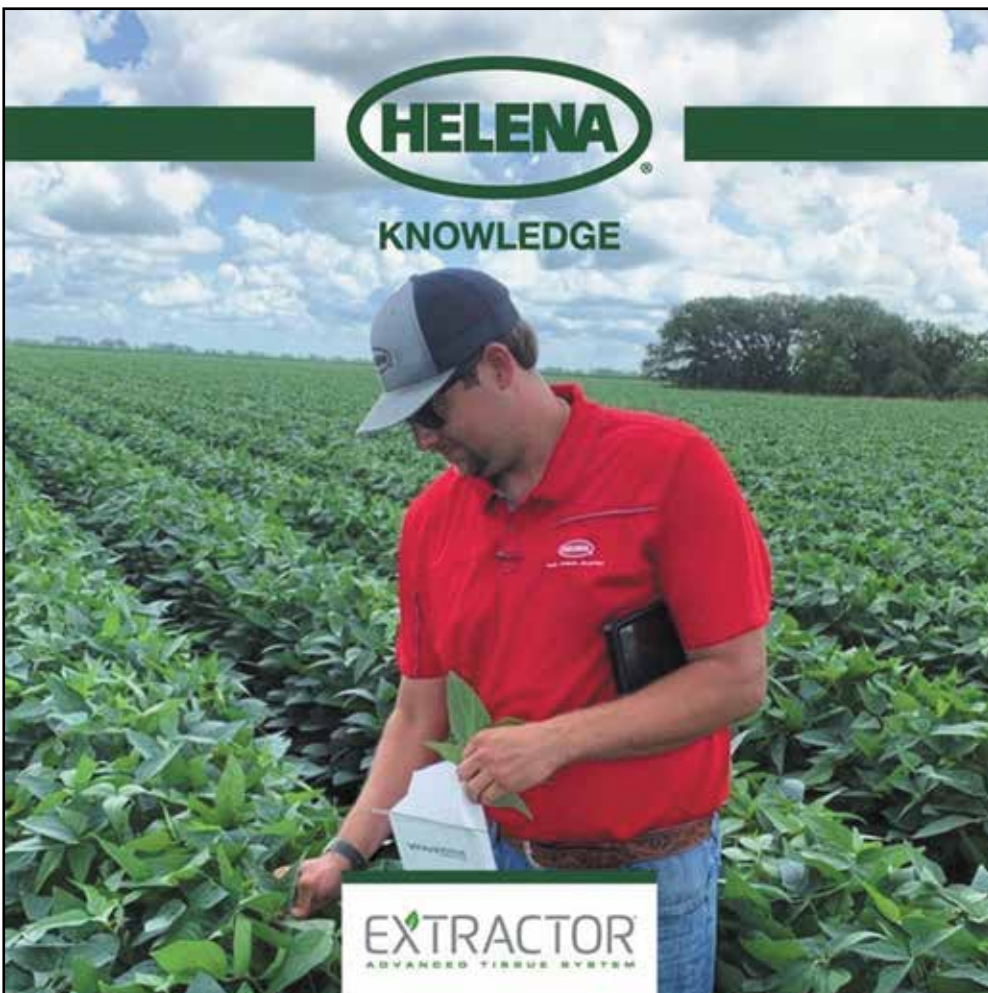
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How rising food demand is affecting farming

The population is growing and so is its demand for food to fuel those extra bodies. Harvard Business Review reports the global population has quadrupled over the last century. It's predicted that, by 2050, the population will exceed nine billion people.

The world is not able to feed all of its inhabitants, according to Penn State. There are more than one billion people who are estimated to lack sufficient food, and two billion who do not receive adequate nutrition. Researchers from the Institute on the Environment at the University of Minnesota concluded that, to feed the world by 2030, yields on maize, rice, wheat, and soybeans will have to rise by 60 to 110 percent. At the start of 2023, projections show them only increasing by 45 to 60 percent. There are a few reasons why food supply may not meet up with demand.

- **Climate change:** Climate change is predicted to cause issues to crop yields, especially in portions of the world where the population is growing the fastest. For example, a recent NASA study published in the journal *Nature* predicts that high greenhouse gas emissions may cause corn output to decline as early as 2030, but wheat output would increase. Farmers may need to roll with the punches and shift operations to cope with the environmental changes.

- **Decreased commercial farming interest:** Fewer people are working in farming. Land prices for expansion, new government mandates and regulations, and the impact of immigration and trade policies have made farming less attractive than it once was. Fewer commercial operations result in a diminished food commodity output.

- **Consumer waste:** Food loss and waste (FLW) is a widespread issue, posing a challenge to food security. The World Bank estimates 30 percent of all food across the globe is wasted, amounting to 1.3 billion tons of food per year. The average global household wastes 74 kg of



food each year, according to the United Nations Environment Programme's 2021 Food Waste Index. Food waste is an issue that needs a solution as the world looks for ways to feed an expanding population in the decades to come.

In order to improve output, farmers have to make some changes. These can include investment in tools and technologies that enable farmers to apply nutrients more precisely and at lower cost, advises the Environmental Defense Fund. Seeds that need less water and fewer nutrients, as well as new fertilizers that are less likely to be lost to air and water, are some additional ideas. Farmers also may want to employ green practices, such as hydroponics and drip irrigation, if they haven't already, to improve efficiency and cut costs. The public also may need to petition their lawmakers to make it easier for farm workers arriving on working visas to man the fields.

Food demand continues to rise, and it has become challenging for agricultural operations to keep up. AG233758

Things everyone can do to support rural economies

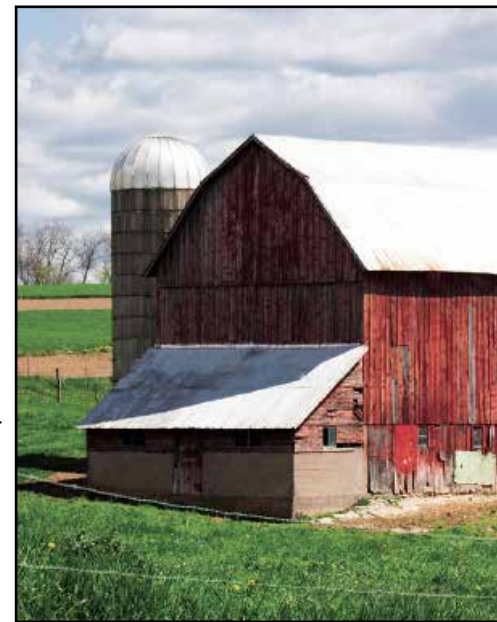
Efforts to revive small business sectors have helped countless communities regain their prosperity and sense of community pride. Those efforts have been wildly effective in many urban areas, and they also can help rural economies recover from the many challenges they've been confronting since the Great Recession, which occurred between 2007 and 2009.

Rural communities have faced many unique challenges since 2007. For example, a 2019 study published in the journal *Rural Sociology* found that 46 percent of remote rural counties were depopulating, while just 6 percent of metropolitan counties were facing population losses. Reviving rural communities does more than help the people who call those communities home. Thriving rural communities can ensure access to fresh foods for people in both rural and urban areas, thus keeping costs down. Thriving rural communities also can reduce reliance on government assistance programs. With access to well-paying jobs, more people in rural communities can live above the poverty line. That's a significant benefit, as the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that roughly 85 percent of counties combatting persistent poverty are rural.

Attempts to revive rural economies will require a collective effort on the part of people from all walks of life, and there's much everyone can do to pitch in.

- **Buy products from local farms.** When buying foods, looking for products from local farms and/or domestic farms can benefit consumers in various ways. Many individuals find locally grown foods more flavorful than products imported from foreign countries. And buying local, whether the farm is on the outskirts of the metropolitan area you call home or elsewhere in your own country, provides some much-needed economic stimulation to rural communities.

- **Look beyond foods.** Rural communities produce more than food. Soaps, lotions, candles, decorative items, and other products people use everyday are



produced on farms and within rural communities. Choosing these products over mass-produced alternatives made in other countries or in places where profits are less likely to be funneled back into local communities is a great way to support rural economies.

- **Support legislation that benefits rural economies.** One of the most effective ways to lend a hand to rural economies is to support legislation that can help them. There are many reasons why rural economies have fallen on hard times, and a lack of digital infrastructure has undoubtedly contributed to those struggles. All businesses benefit from a strong online presence, and communities can attract more remote workers if their digital infrastructure is improved. Those improvements are often the subject of local, state and even federal legislation. Individuals who want to help rural economies can urge their representatives to support legislation that can help rural communities build their digital infrastructure so it's on par with that which has already been established in more populous areas.

Rural economies are struggling. However, there's much everyone can do to pitch in and support efforts to revive rural communities. TF22C558

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Mapping the future of agriculture

The demand for food is directly related to population growth. By 2050, food needs are expected to double, according to a study published in the journal Agricultural Economics. That puts increasing pressure on the agricultural sector to meet growing demand. However, many experts think the industry will fall short.

In addition to increased food demand, consumer habits, technology, and policies continue to force the agricultural industry to evolve. Indeed, the agricultural sector may look very different in the future.

Bigger digital footprint

Social media has transformed many industries, and it can do the same for agriculture. Farming supply chains can communicate with one another by getting feedback from customers in real time through social media. However, agricultural operations will have to devote teams to manage social media presence, especially since misinformation is so widespread on social media.

Apart from social media, local farmers may increase their efforts to utilize mobile apps and direct-to-consumer purchasing options. The global pandemic helped businesses reimagine takeout and curbside shopping. Local farms may want to market to the home-shopping community, providing ways to deliver produce, fresh meat and poultry and other items direct to customers' homes.

Regenerative agriculture



The future may feature a significant shift in the way farms source their ingredients. Regeneration International says that regenerative agriculture can be the future. This describes farming and grazing practices that may help reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity. Some insist that farmers who utilize regenerative agriculture produce food that is more sustainable and healthy. This is something eco- and health-conscious consumers can stand behind.

Technological advancement

There's a good chance that technology will continue to play important and growing roles in farming operations. New agricultural technologies can collect data on soil and plant health and produce results in real time. Precision farming technology can be developed to deliver integrated solutions no matter the size of the operation.

Shift in what's grown

Farmers may give more thought to sustainable products. Crops like hemp and



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cannabis are being utilized in new and innovative ways, and they're only the start as consumers have expanded their views on plant-based foods and products.

While there's no way to see into the future, individuals can anticipate changes that could be in store for the agricultural sector in the decades ahead. AG233764



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Understanding smart farm automation

Modern agriculture looks little like the early days of farming. All aspects of farming have been modified by the access farmers now have to technologies to meet the demands of their work and the pressure a growing population places on farmers to produce quality food.

Farm automation, precision farming and smart farming are strategies utilized by today's farmers. These technologies have become important ways for farmers to optimize the production of food and improve its quality. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, agricultural production must increase by 70 percent in order to meet global food demand by 2050, by which time the population could be 9.7 billion persons.

Smart farming can make raising livestock more accurate and controlled. While farm automation is a broad term, precision smart farming zeroes in on exact measurements between variations in land conditions and livestock, according to Techie Loops, a technology information website. Examples of farming automation technology include:

- autonomous vehicles and machines
- drones
- robotics
- GPS guidance
- micro-forecasting and weather forecasting



- soil sampling
- yield mapping
- use of artificial intelligence
- geomatics
- statistical processes, and more.

Farmers can employ these technologies to save time and also manage labor shortages. Robot-assisted irrigation systems, for example, can maximize efficiency of water distribution where it is needed the most. Weeding robots can use artificial intelligence and computer vision to target field areas and reduce use of pesticides. Driverless tractors can make labor cheaper for farmers by plotting the machine's route and letting it run the course automatically. Harvest robots also exist to grab crops gently (some with vacuum technology) and reduce reliance on field workers. Some harvesters can determine ripeness of fruit via AI technology, according to Eastern Peak, a provider of custom hardware and software solutions for businesses.

Technology is changing farming in many ways. Innovations in automation can make operations more efficient and less costly. AG223780



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