



the ability to reduce the volume of that waste by up to 60%, providing an additional benefit to waste management and the environment.

But whilst there are significant opportunities for insect-based feedstocks, there are also significant barriers to scale. One of these is the EU regulation that forbids incorporating insects into animal diets. Current laws, which date from legislation that followed the BSE crisis, treat insects as animals, so they cannot be fed to other livestock, such as pigs or poultry.

This clearly doesn't make sense, and UK and European legislators must review these measures as a matter of urgency. The PROteINSECT, an EU-funded initiative, is a great example of a coalition of organisations that are trying to address this issue.

We can and must innovate in the protein space to address growing food security concerns. This requires a radical rethink, both in mindsets and in food system itself, as this also presents huge opportunities for businesses, the UK Government and the EU alike. All it requires is creative thinking, a legion of fearless entrepreneurs, and some strategic collaboration across the industry – all of which Forum for the Future is helping to make happen through its Protein Challenge 2040. 🌱

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The focus on global profitability of land must be shifted towards the quality of its produce, writes **Molly Scott Cato**

Across the globe an ongoing corporate land grab is taking place in the shadow of well-meaning initiatives. One such initiative, a 'New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition', was launched in May 2012 in the aftermath of the global food price crisis. This is a partnership between the G8 countries, 10 participating African countries, the private sector and civil society, and aims to achieve 'sustained inclusive, agriculture-led growth in Africa.'

Each participating country makes policy commitments under headings such as 'Business-enabling environment' and 'Land and resources rights.' ActionAid reviewed four of the ten participating countries – Nigeria, Malawi, Tanzania and Senegal – and found that they were offering vast areas of land to large-scale investors under their New Alliance commitments, collectively amounting to 1.8 million hectares of land.

Investors are more often concerned with the price of the land than the intrinsic value of the soil. Rising demand and rising food prices promise easy pickings from food speculation; just add a slick of biofuels to the mix, and you have the perfect recipe for an agricultural land grab. A wealth of investors are taking an interest, from China to Saudi Arabia, whose corporations – whether private, state-owned, or somewhere in between – are buying up land for food, feed and fuel use.

On the ground, these initiatives can often translate to expropriations and land seizure. As customary forms of tenure are formalised, land rights can simply end up in the hands of those who can best exploit the administrative processes. This may be great for agribusiness, looking for

medium-to-large suppliers to feed their supply chain, but it clearly works to the detriment of small-scale farming for local markets. Smaller farmers may be forced to grow for international markets, taking on debt, often by mortgaging their land. Worse still, they may be left landless, and such displacement can then play a role in fuelling conflict and migration. This approach also reduces diversity in farming, resulting in greater market concentration.

The dominance of export-oriented policy, ever more present locally and globally, relies on the fallacy that, to improve agriculture, we must improve its exportation. This may provide growth and suit corporations but not populations. Empowering local communities requires food sovereignty, where food producers have genuine control over the way food is produced and traded.

“ Rising demand and rising food prices promise easy pickings from food speculation ”

Last November, to celebrate the UN Year of Soil, Professor Olivier De Schutter, former UN Rapporteur on the Right to Food, spoke at a European Greens conference in the European Parliament. We were reminded that our food depends on a living soil, on the quality of the land and the respect with which we treat it. We need to work with natural cycles, in a sustainable fashion, rather than pushing our agriculture to 'outsmart' nature through a chemical onslaught of fertilisers and pesticides.

We must shift the focus away from global profitability of the land, towards the quality of soil and its produce and empower communities to define their own food and agriculture systems. 🌱

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