

2025
GLOBAL
FOOD POLICY
REPORT

50 YEARS OF
IFPRI
LOOKING TOWARD 2050

FOOD POLICY
LESSONS *and* PRIORITIES
for a CHANGING WORLD

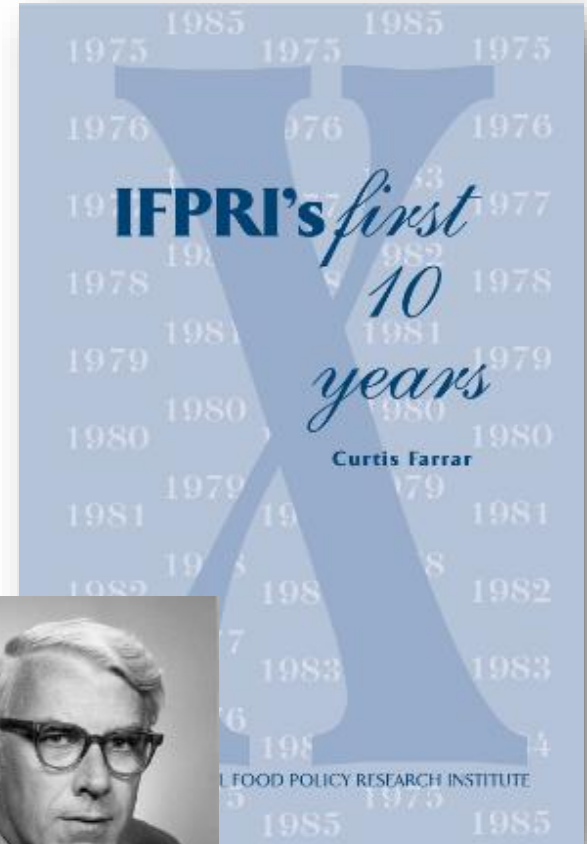
Global Food Policy Report

Overview

Valeria Piñeiro, Eugenio Diaz Bonilla and Joaquin Arias

IFPRI 1975: Champions for food policy research

- National governments and international organizations wanted an independent institution to provide data and inform policy decisions related to developing countries.
- In 1975, IFPRI was established with the financial support of the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada. USAID became an early supporter.
- Focus on international public goods around four themes: (a) World Food Trends, (b) Agricultural Production, (c) Agricultural Growth Linkages, and (d) Food Subsidies.
- In 1979, IFPRI joined CGIAR.



Dale E. Hathaway
Founding Director General

IFPRI has evolved over time

1975

Staff: 40

IFPRI joined
CGIAR in
1979

2000s

Staff: 200



Launched
in 2003

2025

Staff: >500
Interdisciplinary
60% in country programs

Research focused on
international public goods

Greater focus on specific policy issues
at national, regional, or global level

Continuous decentralization
and focus on capacity sharing

Greater specialization to
address fast emerging issues in
a rapidly changing world

Research Programs

World food
trends

Agricultural
production

Agricultural
growth linkages

Food subsidies

Water resource
allocation policies

Property rights &
collective action

Urban challenges to
food security

Large scale interventions
to enhance human capital

Genetic
resources policy

WTO, regional trade &
globalization

Diet quality & diet
changes of the poor

Pathways from
poverty

HIV/AIDS & food &
nutrition security

Market
development

Policy processes in food
security & nutrition

Priorities for public
investment

Development
Strategies &
Governance

Markets, Trade &
Institutions

Natural
Resources &
Resilience

Foresight &
Policy Modeling

Innovation Policy
& Scaling

Nutrition, Diets &
Health

Poverty, Gender &
Inclusion

...and several more

IFPRI's strengths

- **Dedication to research quality**
- **Independence**
- **Reach**
 - Linking global to local
 - On the ground in fragile areas
- **Partners**
- **Focus on systemic solutions**
- **Communication**

#1 in agricultural economics

#2 in economics of Africa

#5 in development economics



50 years of impact



Gender & development



Trade liberalization



Modeling & foresight



Child & maternal nutrition



Political economy analyses



Informing public investments



Evaluating social protection



Capacity building

IFPRI's Strategic Approach to impactful research and engagement in a changing financial and knowledge landscape

**Clarifying the
situation and
outlook**



**Testing, adapting,
and scaling diverse
solutions**



**Shaping enabling
environments**



**Strengthening
research methods
and building
capacity**



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Food policy research and IFPRI's contributions: Past and future

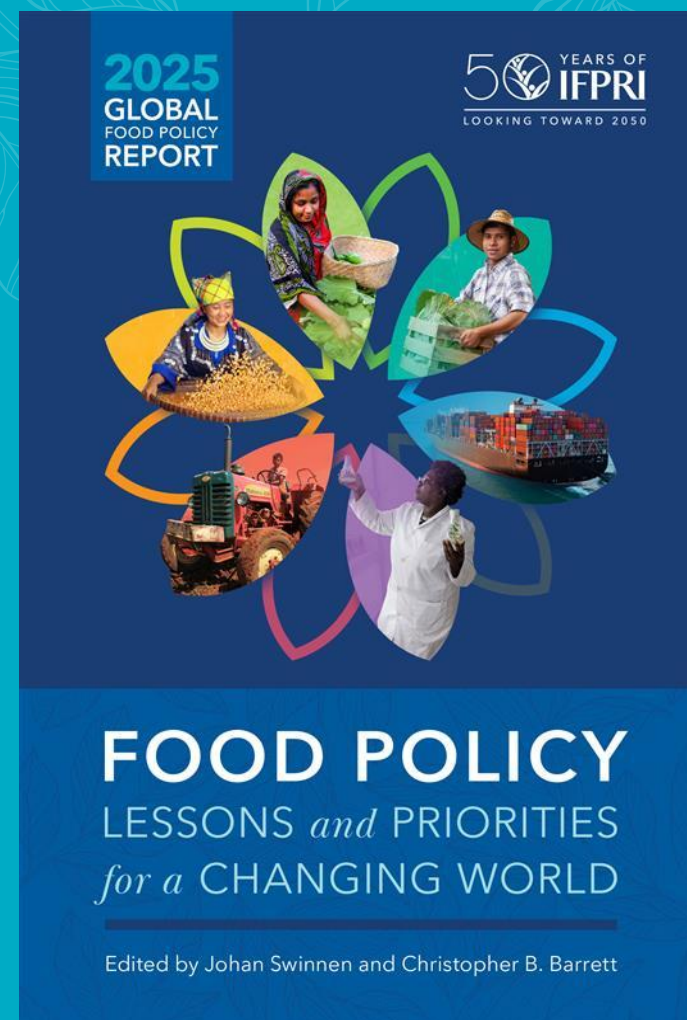


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III: Supporting Farmers

8. Agricultural Extension Services
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10. Insurance

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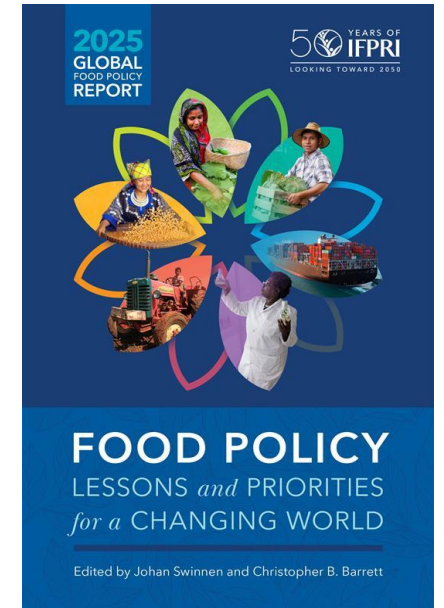
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Phases of challenges and policies: technology and innovation

1960s -1980s

Hunger: Caloric diets
Public interventions,
firms and banks
Less constraints on
climate, natural
resources,
ecosystems, energy

1990s -2000s

Privatization and
liberalization
Diets of convenience
(urbanization, women
in workforce)
Expansion of value
chains and trade

2000s - today

Triple burden
malnutrition and NCDs
Diversified diets
Food systems
Shocks and constrains
climate, energy,
geopolitical

Future

?

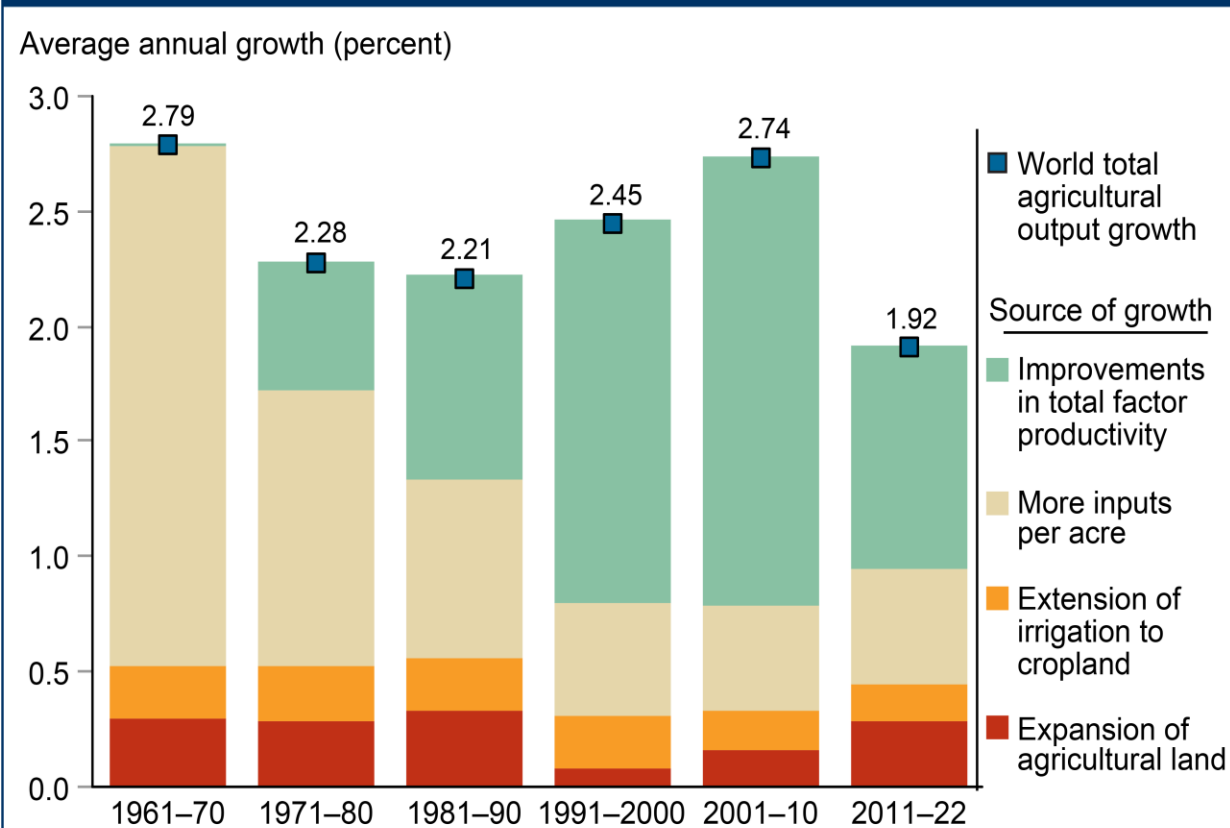
Green Revolution
Lineal technology
generation, adaptation
and transfer
Research centers:
buildings, laboratories,
education

Public spending
prioritization
Structure/management
of R&D organizations
Expansion of private
research and extension
Technologies in VC

Innovation in
complex adaptive
systems
Co-creation with
farmers
Multiple actors
Governance and
political economy

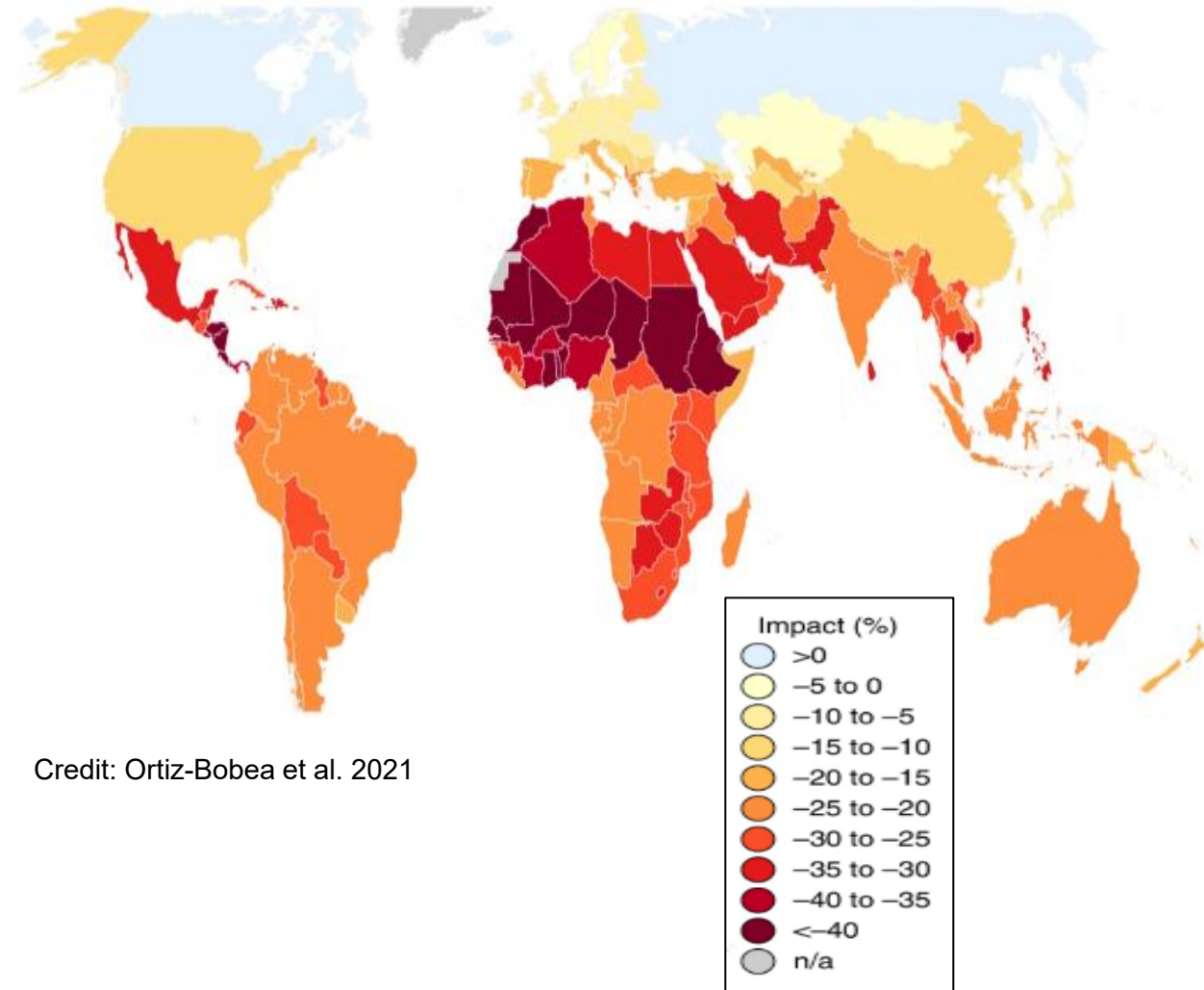
Slowing agricultural productivity growth

Sources of growth in global agricultural output, 1961–2022



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, International Agricultural Productivity data product. Data and methods are as of October 2024.

Country-level impacts of climate change on agricultural TFP



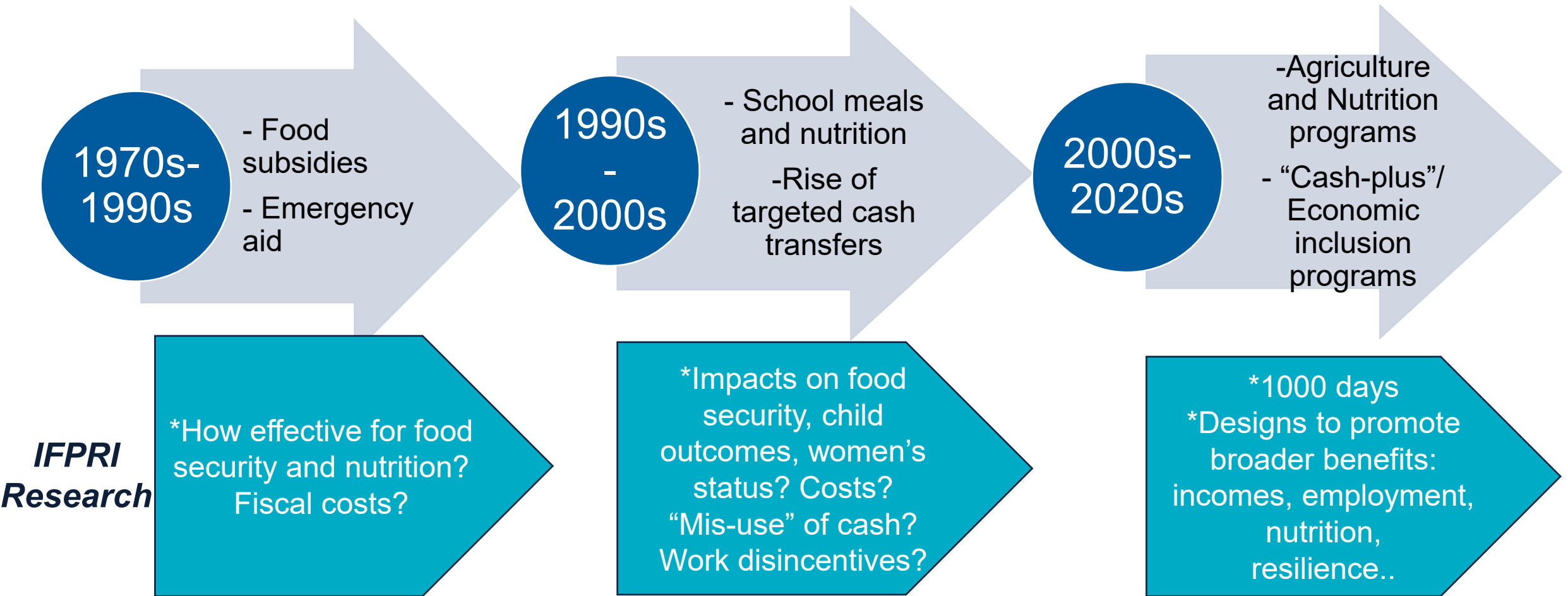
Credit: Ortiz-Bobea et al. 2021

Accelerating agricultural innovation

- Digital technology to facilitate two-way information with farmers. Artificial intelligence to generate “conversational agents” that support extension services with advice on-demand and tailored to farmers’ needs: *Digital innovation*
- Use hotspot mapping to improve geographic targeting, identifying areas where climate risks are high, and adaptive capacities are low: *Geospatial innovation*
- Focus on the informational needs and behavioral preferences of consumers: *Market intelligence*
- Complement new agrifood technologies with financial, insurance, marketing, and digital innovations. Better use of value chains. Leverage social protection programs: *Bundled innovation*
- Governance mechanisms to manage participation of public sector, private firms, universities, and NGOs in R&D and extension: *Governance innovation*
- Designing novel incentives and developing capabilities that encourage discovery, development & delivery: *Innovation incentives*
- Credibly quantify and quality the effects of innovation: *Impact evaluation*



Food security and nutrition

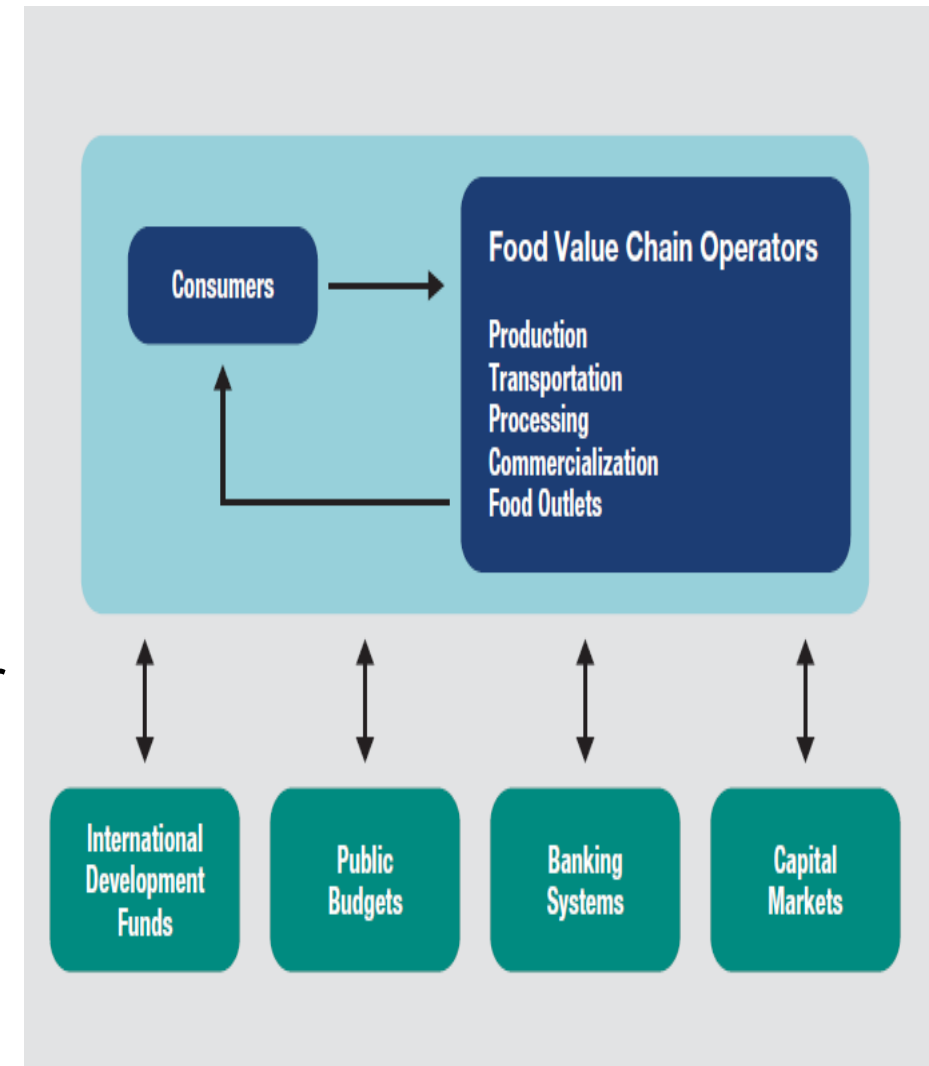


Shift incentives towards healthy diets

Comprehensive **whole-of-government action**, and **policy bundles** (not isolated interventions) to improve food environments. Reduce harmful foods/drinks (taxes, labels, other) and improve access and affordability of healthy diets (production diversification, targeted subsidies, school meals etc.)

Governance, macroeconomics, and finances

- The need of **integrated national programs** (with objectives, costs and financing, and appropriate institutional/governance and operational arrangements). Too many scattered interventions are not effective and have high administrative costs
- Consider all six **financial flows** in the economy
- Adequate **macroeconomic policies and regulations** to frame consumption and production decisions.
- Analysis of **public budgets**, repurposing and optimizing agricultural, social protection, infrastructure, energy, and other expenditures and taxes.
- Analyze funding, institutions, regulations, instruments, and operations the **banking system**.
- Use blended-finance approaches and project preparation facilities to leverage and scale up technologies and develop a robust pipeline of investable vehicles for **capital markets**.

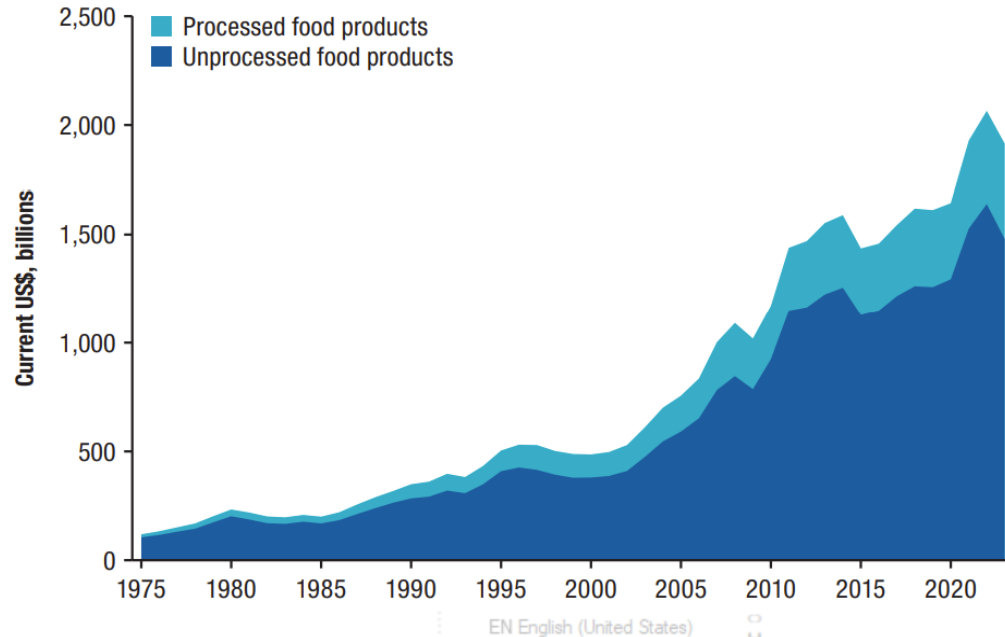


Source: Chapter 18, Diaz Bonilla

Agri-food trade, policies, geopolitics

Expansion of agrifood trade

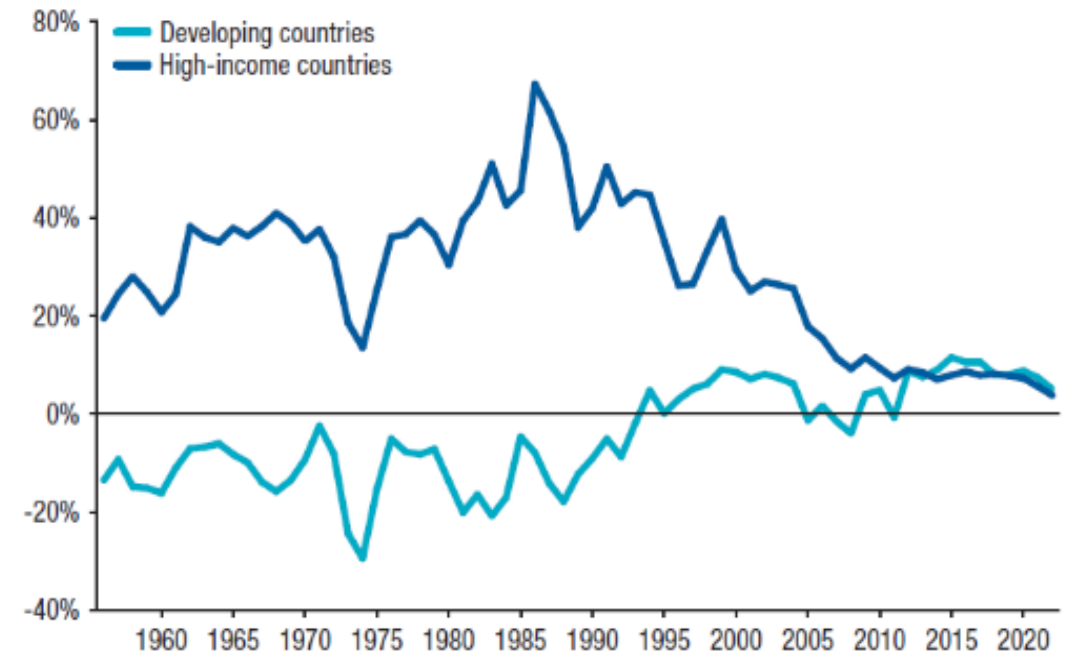
FIGURE 16.2 The shifting composition of expanding world agrifood exports, 1975–2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on Comtrade data. <https://comtradeplus.un.org/>

Source: Chapter 16, Diaz Bonilla et al.

Trade-related policies



Source: AgIncentives Consortium database. www.agincentives.org

Note: Rates refer to the nominal rate of protection (NRP), as defined in footnote 2 to this chapter.

*Resilient **trade** as pillar of food security, lowering food prices and spreading risks—no country can rely solely on self-sufficiency. Consider balance of producers and consumers in the “food price policy dilemma”

*Global South producers depend on predictable market access to scale innovation and incomes. Problems of geopolitical fragmentation. Reinforce multilateral and regional frameworks

Cross-cutting lessons from policy research

- **Policy evolution is nonlinear** – Reforms advance through cycles of learning, crisis, and adaptation. What are the emerging problems and how are being addressed?
- **Take a “systems view” at various levels and define a “vision”** – Problems/opportunities must be analyzed in their systemic connections. Then drill down into territories, ecosystems and households to understand the more micro economic, social and environmental aspects. **Define the desired future considering diverse objectives and their interactions**
- **Utilize “bundled” interventions** – Many problems/opportunities are affected by different factors that cannot be solved by isolated interventions. Different producers, consumers, territories, ecosystems may need different combination of interventions.
- **Institutions and governance aspects matter** – Lasting impact depends not just on policies, but on strong institutions and governance, with adequate capabilities (human, intellectual, financial...) for the design and implementation of interventions
- **Policy is political** – Evidence must be considered in the context of the political economy (understanding the interests and values of the actors involved) and tailored to governmental decision cycles. Build coalitions for long-term support of policies

IFPRI research agenda for the future

Looking ahead to 2050, the report identifies **six broad priorities for food policy research**:

- **Strengthening resilience and inclusion in food systems everywhere**, with special attention to for conflict- and disaster-affected regions and vulnerable groups.
- **Improving diets and nutrition** by addressing the root causes of poor food environments and enabling healthier choices.
- **Harnessing new technologies responsibly**, including digital innovations and AI, while ensuring equitable access and inclusion.
- **Engaging the private sector** to expand investment in food systems innovation, from R&D to sustainable value chains.
- **Mobilizing and reforming existing public spending**, including repurposing agricultural support to align with sustainability and nutrition goals.
- **Fostering interdisciplinary research and policymaking**, breaking down silos between agriculture, health, environment, and trade.
- The report also underscores the importance of **building local research capacity and partnerships** to support evidence-based policymaking in low- and middle-income countries.

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Latin America and the Caribbean

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It is necessary to transform the food systems of Latin America and the Caribbean through investment and innovation.

A response is needed to climate change, environmental degradation, and social inequalities.

Sustainable and climate-smart agriculture

Promote sustainable and resilient agricultural practices for food security

Equitable access

Close gaps for small-scale producers and women.

Innovation and technology

Scale up technologies (digital tools, precision agriculture, and biotechnology) to improve productivity.

Diets and nutrition

Promote healthy food environments and policies for better nutrition

Regional cooperation

Strengthen knowledge exchange in response to global challenges (climate change and food trade).

Financing

Mobilize resources for a sustainable and inclusive transition.

Foresight and impact assessment

Inform effective interventions that respond to economic shocks, climate risks, and crises.

Download the book

