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Food Shortages Soon Come – What To Do?

By Anony Mee

8-10 minutes

A concatenation of events is dropping on us like an imploding building and there's not much we can do to stop it. However, we can mitigate some of the potential damage through our individual efforts and need to get started now.

But first, one bit of good news. H. Douglas Lightfoot and Gerald Ratzler have published a [paper](#), “The Sun Versus CO2 as the Cause of Climate Change Projected to 2050,” that thrashes the IPCC's global warming model.

However, the paper also kicks off this food shortage discussion. The authors say the earth “is now in the early stages of cooling that might be similar to the Dalton Minimum and last for three or four decades.

Average temperatures can drop by up to 1.5 degrees C and increase the rate of crop failures that have already started. It won't be easy to maintain the benefits of the recent warm phase of the Sun during the upcoming solar minimum." That's 2.7 degrees F, and significant.

Lightfoot and Ratzler confirm that we've already entered the Modern Grand Solar Minimum ([GSM](#)) and that negative impacts on crops are already occurring. We've seen harvest shortfalls in a variety of crops around the world over the past couple of seasons. Coupled with these shortfalls, a few countries have limited or halted exports of staple products, mostly grains and legumes.

For two years and continuing until today, there have been interruptions in commodities for sale. A number of factors contribute to this stuttering availability of commercial goods. Labor shortages in picking, packing, processing, and transportation led to gaps on some grocery shelves. Delayed imports of raw materials for canning, bottling, and bagging due to shutdowns in countries of origin will likely continue, especially now that China is locking down

whole cities again.

Because of recent crop failures and lackluster harvests, many regional grocery warehouses, which usually have about 18 months' worth of packaged and frozen food in stock, are practically empty according to a friend whose family owns a large chain of stores. Low stocks of livestock feed and hay due to drought are reducing meat, poultry, milk, and egg production in some areas.

Monica Showalter's excellent [article](#) the other day— Biden is about to get caught flat-footed on another crisis: Ukraine war—generated global food shortages— examines the impact that Russia's war on Ukraine is having and is expected to have on global grain and fertilizer availability, as well as food production.

Besides the drought hitting the mid-plains and potentially causing the abandonment of this year's winter wheat (that's for flour) crop, the La Niña system is expected to bring above-average rains to the eastern and southeastern parts of the US, potentially delaying planting and harvest. If California continues to value a practically

nonexistent smelt over its people, there will be little water for the Sacramento-area rice farmers. They've already pulled down avocado and almond orchards due to restricted water allocations elsewhere in the state.

Farmers are being hit hard by shortages and skyrocketing inflation, just like the rest of us.

Anhydrous ammonia, used to fertilize most grain and many row crops, has had a massive jump in price from \$487 per ton in 2020, to \$746 in 2021, to a record-breaking \$1,492 per ton the first week of February this year. Demand for fertilizer is expected to grow, but high prices in Europe for natural gas (from which the fertilizer is made) caused a slowdown in manufacturing last winter.

Agriculture production runs on a very tight margin, with producers taking all the risk for seed, livestock, machinery, and labor, along with weather, with no guarantee of success or profit at the end of the year. Some farmers and ranchers, faced with such increased costs, as well as insupportable costs for fuel and repair parts to run farm machinery, are looking elsewhere.

Opportunities currently exist for farmland to be put into paid conservation easements or fallowed into carbon credits. These require no inputs other than an occasional mowing but produce a guaranteed payment. Some farmers have taken advantage of these already.

I had recommended [before](#) that folks begin to stock up on long-season pantry items like grain, pasta, oils, and the like to carry them through the worst of the GSM. Variable weather is the hallmark of these cyclical events.



Image: [Vegetable garden](#) by Jonathan Hanna.

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Christian over at Ice Age Farmer pulled together a [compendium](#) of disasters that occurred during the Maunder GSM of 1645 through 1715. It shows that colder and harsher weather resulted in a patchwork of drought, flood, hard winters, and famine throughout the minimum. We need to remember that, of the general population in the late 1600s, about 90% were engaged in farming. Today, less than 1% of Americans are farmers and ranchers, and only 2% of us live on farms.

Already we are hearing about food rationing in various places in Europe. We've seen some of that during the worst of the pandemic shortages, but it's been managed by local vendors. It's likely to get much worse before it gets better.

Let's Go Brandon's expertise lies in making the worst possible decision given any type of choice and regardless of the number of options available...that much is painfully obvious. We can rest assured that, when the government wakes up to this problem, it will be too late.

The demands of equity will ensure that those at the head of the food and farm assistance lines are the

ones with the most victimhood points. Even if the food we are used to is available, the cost will be close to prohibitive for those on a budget. Also, it's very likely nothing will have been done in the meantime to secure our food stocks from the depredations of the export market. It will be another case of the political class waiting until the last minute and then going overboard trying to react.

So, we must take care of ourselves as best we can. Most of us can't grow sufficient grain or press enough oil to meet our needs, so we need to set aside what we can for future use. We should begin to produce as much of our own food as possible though. It's time to Make Americans Gardeners Again.

Potatoes, other root crops, and winter squashes are tasty, good for us, and are calorie-dense. They are fairly easy to grow and store. Greens can be grown year-round with a little help from inside lighting.

Dwarf fruit trees are attractive, produce early, and can be sheltered fairly easily during harsh weather.

We can preserve the rest of our produce by dehydration, canning, pickling, and many other

ways. The time to buy seeds is now.

Backyard chickens take a little more effort and input, but more recent breeds will lay 200 to 250 eggs or more a year. One hen will need about 90 pounds of feed a year; less if supplemented with garden and kitchen scraps, and moved around the yard for fresh greens (Look up chicken tractors.) Hens are multi-purpose: they provide eggs, meat and, with a rooster, perhaps even a fresh crop of baby chicks. They will clean up the late summer garden and eat all the bugs they can reach. Again, the time to buy chicks is right now. Vendors will happily help anyone get started.

It's up to us. We The People must demand that our government secures our bounty for hard times coming. We must also be prepared to be ignored. Home gardens, community gardens, urban farming, and school and workplace food production will be our generation's Victory Gardens. Let us pray that we prevail.

Anony Mee is the nom de blog of a retired public servant whose baby chicks are peeping happily right next to her.