

Does your golf course's clubhouse throw out food every week? This isn't an indictment of your operation (because we all waste food), it's just a question. And later in this column, I'll suggest an answer to what you can do with any leftover food instead.

Now, I'd like to take you back to June when I attended the BASF Agricultural Solutions Media Summit in Chicago. The conference's theme was sustainability. One of the speakers — and I salute BASF for including him — was Roger Thurow, the senior fellow on global agriculture and food policy for the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. Thurow spent 20 years as a foreign correspondent for The Wall Street Journal in Europe and Africa. He saw more of this world than we'll ever see. The sights weren't all pretty. Thurow witnessed people dying of starvation in Africa.

But Thurow channeled the shock and sorrow of what he saw into action. In his current position, he's doing what he can to help end world hunger. At the BASF event, Thurow's presentation to the 50 or so members of the media, including many from the agricultural industry, focused on sustainable agriculture in Africa.

"One billion people in this world are chronically hungry — that's about 16 percent of the world's population," Thurow said. "That's the highest number in history. Shame on us for letting that happen."

Think about that for a minute — there are more people starving today than ever. It doesn't make you proud to live in modern times.

The good news is we can do something constructive to correct this horrible problem, Thurow said. We can help Third-World farmers in Africa and elsewhere by investing in them and training them in sustainable agriculture.

"Then they can feed themselves and their communities and hopefully have a surplus to boost their income," Thurow said. "That's my definition of sustainability."

Throwing money at the problem in the form of food aid surely helps, but it will not solve the problem. In 2003, America sent more than

'Tis the Season to Help End Hunger

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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\$500 million in food aid to starving Ethiopians. But America spent less than \$5 million in agricultural development in Ethiopia that same year.

Third-World nations are light years behind the United States when it comes to agricultural technology. Thurow's point is to spend more on agricultural development in these nations than on food aid. Then people won't go hungry in the first place.

In 2003, Thurow took a trip to Ethiopia that changed his life. He saw poor children — portraits of famine, Thurow called them — with swollen heads and hollow eyes, the classic symptoms of malnutrition. Thurow was frightened and haunted by what he saw.

Thurow was also outraged. That's why he's on the speaker circuit. Thurow pleaded with the media and others at the BASF event to join him in his outrage. If our government can spend \$3 billion of taxpayers' money on a two-month program like Cash for Clunkers, then it can spend \$3 billion of our money over three years to help end hunger through agricultural technology, he said.

To Thurow's point, this also is an economic issue. "You can't have a sustainable and successful economy when there are a billion hungry people in the world," he said.

Thurow ended his talk by saying it's time to raise the clamor over the debacle that's world hunger. That means writing your representatives in Congress, your senators and even your president. It means taking a stand.

Let's also remember that you don't have to travel to Africa to find hungry people. About that extra food at your golf course's clubhouse — why not donate it to the local soup kitchen or food bank?

We can all do our part to end hunger — in our towns and in our world.

Editor's note: I've been saving this column for December. The topic is appropriate, considering it's the holiday season, a time to help those in need.