



ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

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## This Week's Climate Fact

Friday July 18, 2008

### Inaction on climate could hurt U.S. farmers.

Policymakers are right to ask about the cost of climate change policy. But what path is most expensive: solving climate change or ignoring it? For agriculture it's clear that ignoring climate change is the most costly and dangerous course our economy can take. But don't take our word for it. See what others are saying:

**“Agriculture faces serious decline from global warming.”**

Center for Global Development report, 9/13/07

**“We will continue to see some of the biggest impacts of global warming coming from changes in weather and climate extremes”**

Gerry Meehl, Ph.D., of the National Center for Atmospheric Research sponsored by National Science Foundation, 6/19/08

**Increased heavy rainfall associated with unaddressed climate change "can lead to the type of events [like this summer's floods] that we are seeing in the Midwest"<sup>1</sup>**

Tom Karl, Ph.D., Director of NOAA's National Climatic Data Center, 6/19/08

**“The effects of climate change on water supply and agriculture...could reach almost \$1 trillion per year by 2100”**

Global Development and Environment Institute and Stockholm Environment Institute-US Center, Tufts University report: *The Cost of Climate Change*, May 2008

The costs to American farmers and the agricultural industry if climate change continues to go unaddressed could be staggering. Increased extreme participation events – both flooding and drought<sup>2</sup> – could greatly affect the productivity and usability of valuable farmland. But minimizing these impacts by capping greenhouse gas emissions would benefit American farmers greatly.

In confronting climate change, there is no option without costs. But we do have choices. We can invest a modest amount now – less than 1% of GDP in 2030, according to a survey<sup>3</sup> of independent economic analyses – and get a more secure climate, greater energy security, and new jobs.

Or, by choosing to do nothing, we can pay much more later in rising insurance rates, greater government spending to maintain public infrastructure, the spread of insect-borne disease, and agricultural damage from droughts and flooding.

Acting now to cap greenhouse gas emissions will allow us to manage those economic risks, while also enabling the U.S. to win the race for the clean energy jobs and technologies that will power the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**To protect American farms we cannot continue to let climate change go unchecked.**

*It's time to cap emissions.*

<sup>1</sup> “Climate Change To Spur Extreme Weather,” 6/19/08 <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/06/19/tech/main4196216.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> NOAA report *Weather and Climate Extremes in a Changing Climate*, 6/19/08: [http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20080619\\_climatereport.html](http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20080619_climatereport.html)

<sup>3</sup> Keohane, Nathaniel and Peter Goldmark. “What Will it Cost to Protect Ourselves from Global Warming?” Environmental Defense Fund 2008.