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## Guest Editorial: Feeding Our Future

By NEIL BECKINGHAM, Mosaic Sustainability Manager

The thought of not knowing where your next meal will come from is an unimaginable notion for some and a stark reality for others. In fact, there are more than 700,000 Central Floridians living in food-insecure households. One in four of them are children.

As the Earth's population continues to rapidly grow, so does the pressure increase on local and global farmers to produce more food. Specifically, the world's population is expected to reach 9 billion by 2050 — a milestone that, along with improved diets and urbanization trends will challenge us to more than double our worldwide food production to feed everyone.

The use of commercial crop nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorous and potash) was one of the key breakthroughs developed during the "Green Revolution" from the 1940s to late 1970s that increased and now underpins global food production. The Mosaic Company is the world's largest combined producer of phosphate and potash — two of the essential crop nutrients.

As Mosaic's sustainability manager, I and our employees know too well the issues surrounding hunger. At Mosaic, our mission to help the world grow the food it needs presents a valuable opportunity to partner with organizations that are working to build global food security, ensure sufficient access to nutritious food for all and advance global agricultural development. We also know that hunger looks different at the local level than the global one where 2 billion people live on less than \$2 a day.

Mosaic recently hosted a hunger-relief forum. During the event, I had the privilege of participating in an exciting and insightful discussion panel that convened regional experts who play an active role in reducing local food insecurity levels. Seeking to spark a community dialogue about the issue of food insecurity, the panel consisted of representatives from Feeding America Tampa Bay, the University of South Florida's Patel College of Global Sustainability and the Florida Association of Food Banks.

Together, we talked about the implications of food insecurity in Central Florida and how to meet the growing demand for food production. Our panel addressed the region's biggest challenges, which included an increasing population of food-insecure families, the importance of nutrition and the need for increased awareness about these issues.

We also discussed the solutions required to feed our growing population. From educating farmers about critical crop nutrient stewardship programs to reducing the amount of food waste and increasing the access to food for those in need, hunger-relief solutions require advocacy on all fronts — mining and agriculture, academia and nonprofit services.

Ultimately, addressing adequate and affordable food supply is a discussion topic we all need to be involved in. Finding sustainable food solutions is an absolute necessity if we wish to protect our environment and keep up with the present and future needs of our growing local and global population. Solutions clearly require a holistic approach that starts literally from the ground up — from mine to market. We welcome the dialogue and working together to find solutions.



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