

Hunger Can't Wait

“The subject of man, his need for food, and what can be done to obtain it is virtually without beginning and certainly without ending.”—Joseph Sander, in *Hunger Can't Wait*. 1975.

I call it ‘gaining perspective.’ Sometimes it is created by what goes on around us; other times, we get it by stepping back—taking a historical approach. I did that recently when I re-read this book. Another perspective, communicated at the recent World Congress of Soil Science, in Thailand, is: *Soils are not a media simply to study, but to use the resource to meet human needs—food and fibre, and how we do it influences the environment we live in.* Taken together, I hope you find this provides a working perspective for us. My experience is that most of you live this perspective and philosophy.

I like to use this space to congratulate and motivate the readership concerning individual contributions—contributions which improve agricultural productivity, farmer economics, and environmental security. So, at times and like you, I test myself concerning how well I’m doing—we’re doing—in making a difference...to better the lives of people. I think we are. I hope you agree.

Now, the tough questions: What are we doing differently, better, or worse than people in our positions did more than 25 years ago when the issue of *hunger can't wait* was addressed?

My observation: We still have good and dedicated researchers—some studying the basic mechanisms and others applying it; we still have progressive farmers adopting better practices; we still have too much out-dated agricultural policy; and, we still have people against change. A working philosophy of mine is that regardless of the negatives, there are still sufficient people to harness together so each individual’s contribution results in positive, real, and sustainable development. There are many examples around the world. We need to replicate them, so I ask for your support in reaching out to others—in science and education, industry, policy-making, and farming—to strengthen the coalition for positive change in agriculture. The hungry are agriculture’s market opportunity. **The fact is, our perspective on how we work will decide if *hunger can't wait*.**

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