

*Special Issue: Mapping the Global Food Landscape***Section I****State of the world food system**Jennifer Clapp<sup>1</sup>, Annette Aurélie Desmarais<sup>2</sup>, and Matias E. Margulis<sup>3</sup>

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The world food system has seen enormous change across a range of issue areas in recent years, as witnessed by the 2007–08 food crisis and subsequent period of volatility and uncertainty in a context of shifting ecological conditions. Closer examination of the specifics of those myriad changes first requires a step back to take stock of the broader shifts that have taken place over the past two decades. The papers in this section set this “big picture” backdrop, situating the global food system within wider contexts and developments and drawing important insights for understanding recent developments on the global food landscape. The papers remind us of the ways in which the food system connects to and also reflects broader economic, political, social, cultural, and ecological settings.

Timothy Wise sets the global economic and political context and argues that the time has come to turn onto the “road less travelled” in the form of policies that are more supportive of small-scale producers rather than the large-scale production-oriented approach that has dominated global responses to the food crisis. With a focus on the international political and social context, Mustafa Koç highlights the legitimacy crisis of the food system, as the global community has repeatedly failed to keep its promises to address hunger and climate change. Harriet Friedmann situates the food system within broader ecological and cultural contexts, and makes the case that we must adopt a landscape perspective that better joins human-cultural and natural systems to build a more socially and ecologically resilient food system.

As Matt Gaudreau emphasizes in his synthesis essay, all of the papers point to the need for a fundamental shift of the policy paradigm: from policies that entrench large-scale industrial agriculture to more resilient food systems and farm landscapes; and from a global and national approach to food security that prioritizes politics and self-interest to more human-scale policies that support an end to hunger amongst those who have the least political power.