



Land of Plenty, Land of Want



Introduction

Investigate the fundamental problem facing today's farmers: how to feed the world's growing population without endangering our environment. Locations: Zimbabwe, France, China and the United States.

Although separated by distance and culture, the world's farmers face a common crucial issue: how to feed more and more people without impoverishing their land.

Journey to Planet Earth visits a remote corner of Zimbabwe where an extended drought threatens to bring disaster to the farms and villages. The country's white-owned commercial farms occupy 80 percent of the most fertile soil and are well irrigated; but, for the small-scale farmers struggling to make do on what is left, changes in the climate can mean starvation. The film looks at communities trying to break free from this cycle of poverty.

In the rugged Auvergne region of central France, families are abandoning their ancestral homes as others struggle to hold on. With its remote location, harsh climate and short growing season, the Auvergne region is hard put to compete in an increasingly international agricultural market. Picturesque villages are becoming ghost towns. Meanwhile Brittany's agricultural boom pits the desire for higher yields against the need to preserve the environment.

Intensive cultivation of the fertile Yangtze River Delta has brought abundance to the nearby city of Shanghai, but China's rapid industrial development is engulfing the countryside at an alarming rate. The country's farmers face the problem of producing more and more food on a dwindling supply of land, and pollution becomes a growing threat as they rely more heavily on the use of chemical fertilizers.

In the United States, once a nation of farmers, only two percent of the population still works the land. The production demands on them are enormous. Journey to Planet Earth visits the Horan brothers in Iowa, who experiment with the latest satellite technology to increase their yields. Next stop is the Groff family in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, whose main concern is preserving some of the richest topsoil in the country through no-till farming.

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