

One in seven rural Americans is poor: Globalization and farm subsidies blamed

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As globalization and farm subsidies drive family farms out of business, people living in rural areas are more at risk for hunger, according to an annual report by Bread for the World, an antipoverty group.

One in seven rural Americans is poor, and almost one-third of those become “food insecure” during the year, says a mid-March study by the Washington-based Christian advocacy and research group with a mission of ending hunger. On a global scale, 75 percent of the 852 million hungry people live in rural areas.

“America’s rural communities and rural people around the world have one thing in common—they are more likely to be hungry and poor than other people in their country,” said David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. “Our report shows that people in rural areas are cut off from opportunity. Governments regard them as a low priority.”

Bread for the World set a millennial goal of cutting hunger in half by 2010, and is urging Congress to better fund nutrition and food assistance programs. The report also criticizes the farm subsidy system, which puts money “in the pockets of large landholders and agribusinesses, doing little to help struggling rural families.”

Groups that helped sponsor the 15th annual report include the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Christian Children’s Fund and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America World Hunger Program. *-Religion News Service*