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## Agricultural expert favors ethanol waiver to avert global crisis

by Sharon Abercrombie

Eco Catholic

A prominent Ohio State University soil scientist is calling for a waiver of ethanol production requirements for farmers to lower corn prices for farmers and consumers this year because he believes it will help avert a global food crisis. Professor Rattan Lal, a native of Punjab region of India who frequently testifies before Congress about climate change, is featured in an Aug. 30 *Columbus Dispatch* interview.

In the story, Lal blames food insecurity on a number of factors, including energy demand. Many countries grow corn, soybeans, canola and sugar cane to produce ethanol rather than food. But, he says, "Food should come first. ... When we use agricultural residues to make fuel rather than return the residues to the soil, as in no-till farming and conservation agriculture, there is nothing for earthworms and bacteria to eat. The result is dead soil incapable of producing food."

Lal will be one of the keynote speakers in Columbus at an international EcoSummit 2012 Sept. 30 to Oct. 5. Other speakers include Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute, and Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, president of the Republic of Iceland.

For further information, go to Mary Vanac's *Dispatch* story.

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