



Headlines of the Future

A podcast by Bayer

Minisode – Farmer to Farmer:

Kate Hayes (host): Welcome to Headlines of the Future. Brought to you by Bayer. Fascinating clues to help solve some of the most pressing global challenges from climate change to feeding a growing population to curing diseases can be found in science and innovation. I'm Kate Hayes and I'm your host of Headlines of

the Future. Brought to you by Bayer. In this podcast, we'll hear from visionary scientists, thought leaders, and entrepreneurs to learn more about how the science of today may positively impact our lives in the future.

Bev Flatt: Welcome to a special episode of the Headlines of the Future podcast brought to you by Bayer. This podcast is usually dedicated to the future of science and innovation, to the pressing global challenges, from climate change, feeding a growing population, or curing diseases. But today's episode we want to dedicate to a group of people who are making a huge effort to protect food security, the farmers who are planting wheat, sunflowers, corn, and other essential crops in Ukraine, a country that is facing an enormous challenge due to the armed conflict that the whole world has been following since the end of February 2022. A country known as the breadbasket of Europe and one of the largest exporters of essential food products in the world.

I'm Bev Flatt, and I'll be your host today. I am a first-generation farmer in the United States, an advocate for feeding a hungry planet, and a regular listener of the Headlines of the Future podcast. We hope you enjoy this chapter, a tribute to the men and women who are facing war by staying in the fields to work the land and continue producing food. One such person is my friend and fellow farmer, Kees. Kees, how about you go ahead and introduce yourself to everyone.

Kees Huizinga: Yes. My name is Kees Huizinga. I'm a Dutch farmer farming in Ukraine. I've been farming now for 20 years. We farm on 15,000 hectares which is around 40,000 acres. We also have 2,000 milking cows, and 450,300 hectares of onions and carrots with drip irrigation and the crops we grow are wheat, winter wheat, winter barley, winter canola sugar beets, sunflower corn, and soybeans.

Bev Flatt: That keeps you very busy it sounds like.

Kees Huizinga: Oh, sometimes it does and sometimes it doesn't.

Bev Flatt: Do you want to talk a little bit about what it's like right now being a farmer while there is while there's war happening in your country?

Kees Huizinga: Yeah, you can call it what it is. It's a war happening. Luckily, we are in an area where there are no bombs and rockets falling. Although we had a rocket launch from an airplane landing and exploding in the middle of a nearby village. Luckily, nobody got hurt. In normal times that doesn't happen. No, there are no bombs or rockets exploding here. So, we can go out planting, but it's difficult to be able to get fuel - diesel fuel.

Fertilizer is difficult. Seeds, we managed to get. But I just got also a text message from a colleague in Sumy that's in the Northeast, and he really has difficulties getting fuel. They still don't really have access to diesel fuel. They will still have problems planting.

Bev Flatt: So, food security is a concern even when there are times of peace and now we're having to address it while there are times of war and there's an even bigger magnification on it. How do you think that this is going to impact food security for the world?

Kees Huizinga: There will be more than 10% less seaborne trade. So, you know, normally the markets panic if there's a drought in the corn belt and there you will have ended up as an impact of like maybe 1-2% on the seaborne trade. And now traders have estimated over 10%. So, they can't imagine what the consequences will be for world food security.

It will be the poor countries suffering from this like Northern Africa, the Middle East, and East Africa. And for example, there was an article in The Guardian a few weeks ago. It says before the war there were already close to one and a half million children under five years of age malnourished. They got a lot of food from the United Nations World Food Programme and they buy like 50% of their food from Ukraine. So, the stuff won't arrive there.

Now we get in the middle of the planting season. So, it's kind of already, too late. You know, the next challenge is next year. But if this keeps dragging on, then we as farmers in Ukraine won't be able to sell our product because the ports in the Black Sea are closed. Fertilizer won't be available. We won't have any money, so we won't be able to buy fuel. So then next year, the harvest of 2023 will also be gone. So, then the problems worldwide will only become bigger.

Pity is a soft word in this case that people, in general, have kind of grown loose from farming. People don't really know where their food comes from and in this case that will become a huge problem.

Bev Flatt: I think that's a really good point. A lot of people, when they think of food security, think the responsibility only lies with the farmers who are growing the food, but really it's the responsibility of everyone. Our listeners are primarily people who aren't on farms. So, what would you ask of those listeners when it comes to helping create a more food secure world?

Kees Huizinga: For a food secure world, you need peace. And you have to have good agricultural policies around the world, and you have to respect where your food comes from. You have to be sure that your food is safe, so that's something you can demand from farmers. But you also have to respect farmers and you have to learn about farming. You don't have to know all the details of course. But for example, my wife was giving some talks to school classes, like fourth, fifth, and sixth graders at school. Like she was asking the kids 'what's happening on the field right now'. And they didn't know. They say "harvesting?" You do that in the summer and in the fall. And now it's the time of planting. And if you don't plant, you can't harvest. So that's some basic knowledge people should have about food. You have to know how vulnerable all those food supply chains are.

Yeah, and you just need peace. It won't really be such a huge problem in the Western world or in the United States, although it will become much, much more expensive, but you know, the poor countries in the world, they will really suffer from this. And that also has its effect on the rest of the world of course.

Bev Flatt: Thank you Kees. And thank you Kate for having us join the podcast on this important topic and during this important event in our lives.

Kate Hayes: I'd like to thank you both so much for this great conversation. I feel like I learned a lot. And, I'd like to thank all of our listeners for tuning in to Headlines of the Future.

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