

## [Christian Aid's If: Why won't these people read their own damn reports?](#) [1]

Written by [Tim Worstall](#) [2] | Saturday 26 January 2013

Another day another gaggle of idiots demanding that the world be run in their image. This time it's [Christian Aid](#) [3] and the usual fellow travellers launching a campaign called "If".

Their basic observation, that there's enough food that pops out of the fields of the earth to feed us all, is entirely true. Further, that despite this enough food there are those who go hungry, to the point of malnutrition and starvation is also true. Thus it is also clearly true that it is desirable that we do something about this.

Excellent, but something must be done does not mean that this is the something that we must do. Their something(s) are that we should collect more tax, spend more in aid, bash the corporations and well, you've heard the list often enough, you can complete it.

Other than the obviously sensible idea that we should stop putting food into cars this is, I'm afraid, just the usual wibble. And what makes it so extremely annoying is that we've had a couple of reports recently telling us what actually does need to be done. Just last week it was IMechE and some months back Oxfam I think it was. They noted that food waste in this world divides into two. There's us people in the rich world who find food so convenient and cheap that we don't even bother to grind up the potato peels into nourishing gruel. Quite the shame on our society. In the poor parts of the world that's not the problem at all: anything not actually rancid that makes it into a poor household is going to get eaten.

There the problem is that up to 50% of the food rots or is envirmined between the field and the consumer. Our food waste could be solved by a good recipe for turnip scrapings. The poors' food problem could be solved by....well, by what? Well, by the same darn system that makes food so cheap for us. The commodity suppliers that do the trucking of food around, run the grain elevators, store the potatoes. The food commodity markets that allow the risks to be spread from farmers and consumers to speculators. The supermarkets and the industrial processing companies that extract every possible calorie and then present it to us in rat and roach free surroundings.

In short, what the poor world needs is a food industry as we have a food industry. One that gets the crops from the fields to where mothers can prepare it for their children without it rotting or being eaten by animals and bugs along the way.

So do they suggest that this is what should be done? The people who know how to solve the problem should be offered access to go and solve the problem? Do they heck:

If we force governments and big corporations to be honest and open about their actions that stop people getting enough food. Transparency and accountability are vital in the global food system. Decisions that can affect millions of people are made behind closed doors, without the participation of those affected. Corporates and governments must be more transparent about their affairs so that citizens can hold to account powerful players in the food system.

It's not that big corporations aren't transparent. It's that big corporations who know how to do these things aren't there. Often aren't allowed to be there (as in India).

I'm all for solving problems like aiding the poor in gaining access to food. But I really do wish these campaigners would just bother to read what others have been trying to tell them on these very subjects.

After all, we are continually told that it's industrial agriculture and supermarkets that are making us all fat. And isn't that what we're trying to achieve? That the poor also gain an opportunity to get fat? So why aren't we recommending industrial agriculture and supermarkets as the solution?

I assume politics has something to do with this stupidity.

[blog comments powered by Disqus](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

---

**Source URL:** <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/international/christian-aids-if-why-wont-these-people-read-their-own-damn-reports>

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/international/christian-aids-if-why-wont-these-people-read-their-own-damn-reports>

[2] <http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5778>

[3] <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/if-enough-food/issues.aspx>

[4] [http://disqus.com/?ref\\_noscript](http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript)

[5] <http://disqus.com>