

RESEARCH SAYS:

“They cheated the farmers. Tobacco farmers have families, they run businesses, they work real hard on the land.... I think they are the innocent people in this.”
Steve Stricker, Lenoir County, 2010

Tobacco is known to be grown in at least 110 countries occupying 3.8 million hectares of agricultural land. There are only 10 countries in which tobacco is not grown, and 100 countries in which it is not grown in the remaining countries of the world. World tobacco production peaked in 1997 at over 7 million tonnes and has since declined by more than 20% to 5.7 million tonnes in 2009.

Tobacco is mostly grown in low and middle-income countries, where it is a contributor to environmental damage because the land is used to grow tobacco when it could be used to grow other crops. In 2009, SIX OF THE TOP TEN COUNTRIES PRODUCING TOBACCO WERE IN UNDERDEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH AN AVERAGE 27%. In 2008 in the world's top tobacco-producing country with the most tobacco, each hectare of land produced 1.1 tonnes of tobacco. In the United States, each hectare produced 0.5 tonnes of tobacco.

Reducing tobacco yields is the most effective way to reduce tobacco production. Tobacco yields from wood-burning are the highest, and for tobacco production, each hectare produces 1.1 tonnes of tobacco.

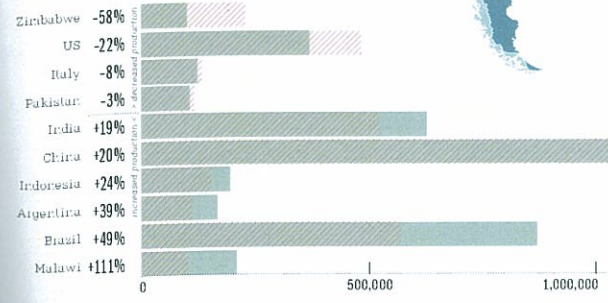
of forests are cleared to cure tobacco. Tobacco leaches the soil of many nutrients, so fertilizers and pesticides are heavily used in tobacco production. These chemicals endanger workers and create runoff that pollutes the environment.

No matter where tobacco farmers work, these individuals experience illnesses through their exposure to pesticides (which cause neurological damage) and nicotine (which results in green tobacco sickness). In addition to health impacts, many tobacco farmers are trapped in a cycle of poverty, as they are required to purchase high-cost equipment and infrastructure with little profit remaining. In 2003, tobacco farmers in the US received less than 1% of consumer spending on tobacco.

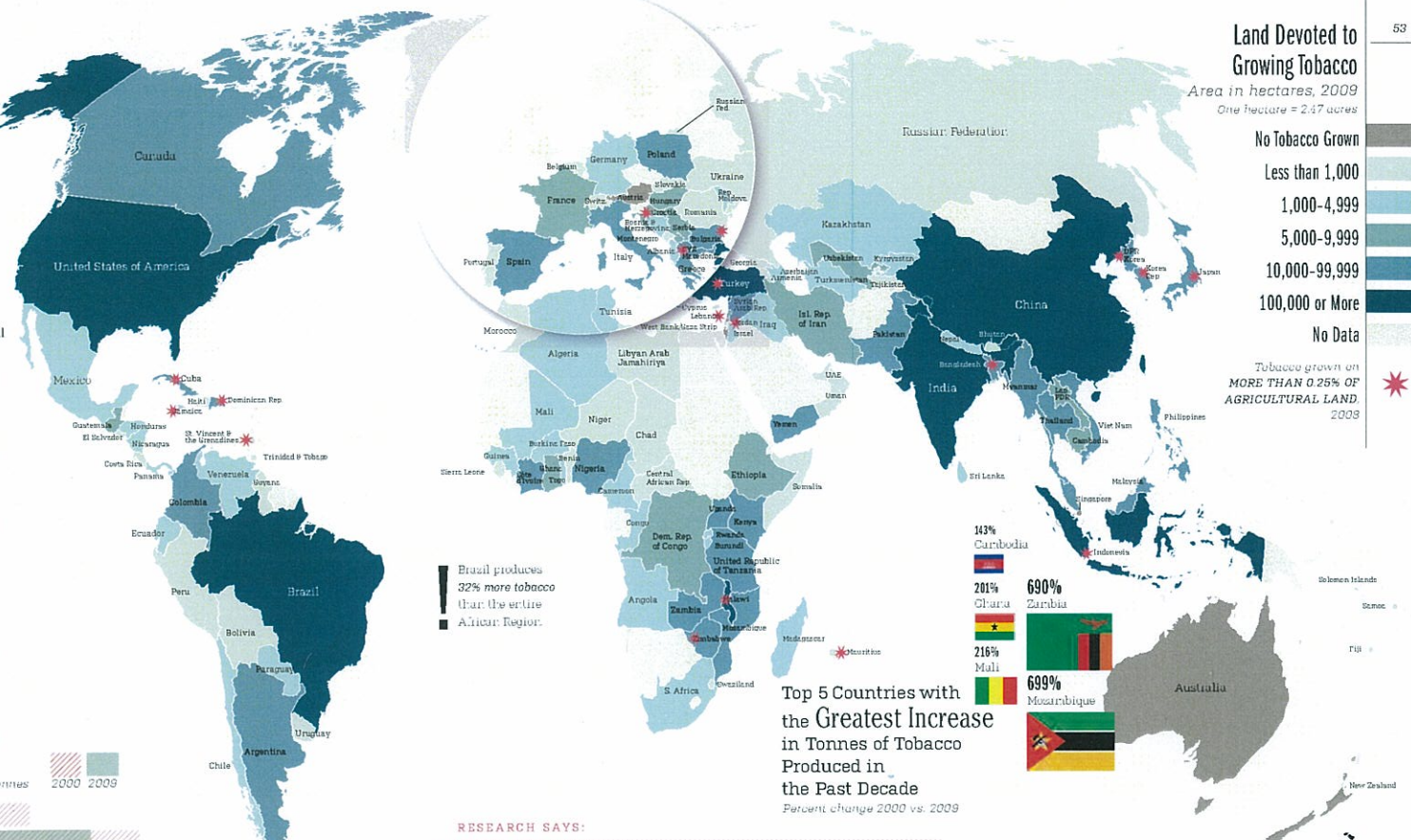
The WHO FCTC calls for financial and technical assistance to tobacco growers in countries dependent on tobacco agriculture. Although shifting from growing tobacco to growing economically and environmentally viable alternatives, such as food, addresses the issue of malnutrition, few countries have implemented such measures.

Leading Producers of Tobacco Leaf

Production quantity in metric tonnes



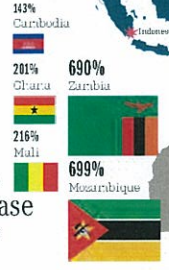
World Tobacco Production



Brazil produces 32% more tobacco than the entire African Region.

Top 5 Countries with the Greatest Increase in Tonnes of Tobacco Produced in the Past Decade

Percent change 2000 vs. 2009



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“You can’t just tell people not to smoke, just like you can’t tell farmers to stop planting. You need to show them a different way.”
Zhao Yaqiao, Yunnan Agricultural University, China, 2011

China produces 43% of the world's tobacco, which is more tobacco than the other top nine tobacco-producing countries combined.