

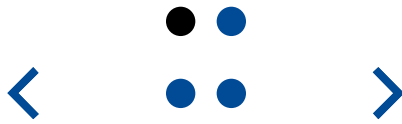
Feeding the world: For one BASF scientist, it's personal



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BASF Corporate Communications North America

For most of us, questions surrounding food are about choices. But for others, here and elsewhere, they are about survival.



It is the most fundamental challenge faced by humankind: feeding 9 billion people by mid-century and doing it in a way that conserves natural resources for generations to come.

The solutions to sustainably feed the world will require connections and collaboration among sciences and scientists. Initiating these connections and collaboration is the focus of Sustainable Food Chains: From Field to Table, a Creator Space™ Science Symposium taking place June 23-24 in Chicago, Illinois.

For most of us, questions surrounding food are about choices. But for others, here and elsewhere, they are about survival. For one BASF scientist taking part in the Chicago Science Symposium, ensuring the world has enough to eat is a challenge that is profoundly personal.

Bryan DiMenna's life began in rural South Korea in 1980. When his young mother tragically lost her life, he was sent to an over-crowded orphanage in a neighboring town. Blankets on the cold floor served as beds; bath water was shared; what little food they had was rationed so thinly it amounted to almost nothing. Six-year-old Bryan would sneak out at night in search of food. After nights of combing fields and garbage cans for anything to eat, he'd return to the orphanage and share what he'd gathered with his bunkmates.

Fortunately for Bryan, he was adopted by a family in America who provided him with a comfortable and caring home, education and proper nutrition. He seemed to be adjusting well to his new life, when one day his parents made an unsettling discovery. Behind Bryan's dresser they found a hidden stash of food. Inside a backpack in his closet they found another.

"It wasn't until I was about 12 years old that I finally felt secure enough to stop saving stockpiles of food," says Bryan.

Today, Bryan DiMenna is still focused on saving food, but in a much different way. As Technical Marketing Manager on BASF's North American Food Safety Industry Team, he applies his expertise

in microbiology to saving food from spoilage and contamination. At this week's symposium, he's one of more than 350 subject matter experts from academia and industry exploring solutions for a sustainable food chain.

"I am elated that BASF chose sustainable food chain as the central topic for the North American Symposium," Bryan said. "BASF has gathered some of the top thought leaders and innovators in this space and I am honored and excited to participate."

Bryan retains much from his early childhood – including the overwhelming emptiness and hunger of life at the orphanage.

"I have a deep personal empathy with children throughout the world experiencing similar struggles," says Bryan.

In addition to influencing his career path, that empathy also permeates his personal life. Together with his two boys and his wife, Alexandra, who he met at church Thanksgiving food drive in 2006, Bryan dedicates much of his free time to easing the plight of the hungry through a variety of community projects and global programs.

"Nearly 800 million people lack proper nutrition and the population is steadily growing," Bryan said. "As the world's leading chemical company, BASF has an important role to play in developing solutions to huge challenges like hunger, and I'm proud to be part of this important work."

The Creator Space Symposium in Chicago is one of three BASF is convening in 2015; each focused on one of the three 150th anniversary "sustainable future" topics – smart energy, urban living and food – and held in one of BASF's top three regional markets – Europe (Ludwigshafen), North America (Chicago) and Asia (Shanghai).

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I was so deeply moved with Bryan's story, and I was equally deeply touched by standing ovations he received at the Science Symposium in Chicago. When our guests, colleagues and executives all stood up to share their support and acknowledge Bryan's journey, together we created and held a wonderful space that goes beyond labels, positions and roles. It was a moment to remember and treasure for the rest of my life.

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In 1974, Henry Kissinger, America's secretary of state, told the first world food summit that no child would go to bed hungry within ten years. He was miles off... The number of undernourished people in the world has fallen since 1990, but only by a fifth, and now stands at about 800m... As the world's economy has grown, the prevalence of undernourishment—eating too few calories to sustain an active life—has fallen only half as fast as poverty. To be healthy, people need not just calories but nutrients such as vitamins and minerals. As undernourishment has fallen, the number of people eating too many calories has risen correspondingly, meaning that many developing countries suffer all three manifestations of malnutrition—undernourishment, micronutrient deficiency and obesity—simultaneously. Why has the world done so poorly on nutrition compared with poverty? Read the full article here:

<http://www.economist.com/news/international/21635046-world-has-terrible-record-improving-peoples-diets-may-be-changing-feast-and>

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