



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on March 17, 2026

Fertilizer Bottleneck at Hormuz Raises Risk of Food Inflation and Worsening Global Hunger

American farmers are ringing alarm bells. They warn that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz could trigger a cascading crisis in agriculture and food supply. The concern is urgent. War in Iran is escalating, and fertilizer needed for spring planting is stuck in disrupted shipping lanes. Food prices are already rising. The average price of food in the United States increased by [3.1 percent](#) in the 12 months ending February, up from 2.9 percent in January.



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The global picture is growing darker. The World Food Programme (WFP) [reported](#) on Tuesday that roughly 45 million more people could be “pushed into acute hunger” this year if the war persists.

In recent days, President Donald Trump [urged](#) U.S. allies to help secure the critical shipping corridor. Yet, their enthusiasm [remains low](#). Analysts note that a closure of the Strait of Hormuz has long been viewed as a likely Iranian response to U.S. and Israeli military actions.

Some observers question whether worsening food insecurity fits into a broader depopulation and control agendas of global elites.

American Farmers

Last Monday, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) laid out the risks in direct terms. The group representing 2 million farms wrote to Trump:

[W]e are still experiencing a generational decline in farm income driven by out-of-control inflation and dramatically declining crop prices. This is especially concerning when, just as America’s farmers begin to put seeds in the ground for spring planting, the prices for key inputs such as fertilizers and fuel increased rapidly following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The letter highlights the core vulnerability:

Like oil, global fertilizer markets are highly vulnerable to disruptions in maritime transit routes, especially through the Strait of Hormuz.

[One-third](#) of global seaborne fertilizer trade (about 16 million tonnes) passes through the Strait of Hormuz, making it a critical chokepoint for agricultural supply chains worldwide.

Fertilizer is the backbone of modern agriculture. Without it, yields fall, and supply tightens. Farmers



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warned of broader consequences:

Without strategically prioritizing the delivery of critical farm inputs ... the U.S. risks a shortfall in crops.

They tied the risk directly to inflation:

Such a production shock could contribute to inflationary pressures across the U.S. economy.

The letter also stressed compounding pressures:

Further, the recent energy production halts in the Middle East will affect the price and availability of many downstream products farmers depend upon. These supply chain shocks are expected to drive already record-high input prices even higher at a time when farm margins are already extremely tight and many farmers are underwater.

Disruptions now could ripple through the entire food system:

We are deeply concerned that failure to act could lead to disruptions to the food supply chain not seen since 2022 when food price inflation reached 40-year highs.

Fertilizer Disruption

Indeed, the pattern is familiar. In 2022, the war in Ukraine [disrupted](#) wheat and fertilizer exports from both Ukraine and Russia, sending global prices to record highs and feeding directly into food inflation and insecurity.

A similar dynamic is now unfolding.

Recent reports from numerous outlets, including [Business Insider](#), underscore that the current inflation risk is not just about oil, but also about fertilizer.

Core agricultural inputs, including urea, ammonia, sulfur, nitrogen, and phosphates, have surged in price as the war disrupts shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. The timing is critical. The spike comes during spring planting.

Business Insider notes that nearly half of global urea and sulfur shipments move through the strait. Around 20 percent of natural gas used for nitrogen fertilizers also transits the region, according to the Fertilizer Institute. This creates a clear bottleneck. When transit slows, supply contracts quickly, and input costs rise.

Reporting from [AgWeb](#) underscores that even when the United States is not directly importing fertilizer from the Middle East, domestic prices still follow global markets.

The United States relies on both domestic production and imports to meet fertilizer demand. According to the AFBF, the United States imports roughly 97 percent of its potassium, 18 percent of its nitrogen, and 13 percent of its phosphate.

Some shortages are already emerging. According to [Reuters](#), "The U.S., which in some years imports half of its urea fertilizer, is about 25% short of the usual supplies that farmers buy for spring planting."



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Energy disruptions are amplifying the impact. Agricultural economist Richard Volpe called rising energy costs the most critical risk to the global food supply chain, citing their “multiplier effect.”

“As we go down the food supply chain, go downstream towards consumers, those higher energy costs are going to be compounded,” he [told](#) Andalou Agency.

Grocery Bills

The impact does not stop at the farm. It moves quickly to the checkout line.

Higher fertilizer costs raise the cost of growing food. Farmers respond by increasing prices on crops. Those increases pass through processors, distributors, and retailers. Consumers feel it last, but often the most.

Economists say the mechanism is straightforward. When input costs rise, food prices follow with a delay. That lag can mask the problem at first. Once it appears, it tends to persist.

Economist Joseph Brusuela told Business Insider, “Higher fertilizer costs will certainly contribute to higher prices at U.S. supermarkets.”

Staple foods are especially sensitive. Corn and wheat sit at the base of the food system. They feed livestock and anchor processed foods. When their costs rise, the prices of meat, dairy, bread, and packaged goods all move higher.

The burden falls unevenly. Higher-income households usually absorb the increase. Lower-income families feel it immediately as a larger share of their budget goes to food.

The pressure extends beyond groceries. Restaurants adjust prices. School meal programs face higher costs. Food banks see rising demand at the same time supply becomes more expensive.

Global Hunger Risks

The consequences extend far beyond grocery bills. For many countries, the issue is access to food itself.

While the policy direction of the UN agencies is unequivocally globalist, their data remain difficult to ignore. The UN World Food Programme warns:

Almost 45 million more people could fall into acute food insecurity or worse (known as IPC3+) if the conflict does not end by the middle of the year, and if oil prices remain above USD 100 a barrel. These would add to the 318 million people around the world who are already food insecure.

The agency stresses that the shock will hit fastest where households already live on the edge.

The disruption is already spreading through energy, fertilizer, and food markets. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [warned](#) that shipping disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz are driving up costs and exposing vulnerable economies to cascading risks. The entity drew unmistakable parallels:

Past crises — including COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine — showed how disruptions to energy, transport and agricultural inputs can quickly spread across interconnected markets.



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Covid 2.0?

Critics such as investment banker and [Solari Report](#) founder Catherine Austin Fitts have already dubbed the economic effects of the conflict “Covid 2.0.” In a [recent interview](#), she questioned whether the prolonged blockade is really rooted in America’s inability to solve it, implying the degree of intent. She also stressed the timing of cuts to food-assistance programs by the Trump administration, raising concerns about how such decisions intersect with a rapidly worsening global supply shock.

There is no need to excuse these programs. Federally-run domestic and international food-assistance systems are unconstitutional. Yet the reality remains: Millions have become dependent on them, especially during crises that are themselves driven by state actions. Cutting support while costs surge only amplifies the impact and raises the risk of famine.

Broader Covid-like effects of the war, many of them avoidable, are already visible. Global supply chains are being disrupted. Food systems are coming under pressure. Prices for essentials are rising. To conserve energy, some [countries](#) and firms are [reintroducing](#) remote-work policies. The situation may be used as “an excuse to shut down” and impose other forms of control, warned Fitts.



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