

CENTRAL COUNTY

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U.S. foreign food program is inefficient

In a recent RESULTS (the grass-roots citizens' advocacy group against hunger and extreme poverty) meeting, I learned of another example of how our foreign aid subsidizes American business.

Of the food aid we gave in 2006, 98.6 percent was shipped directly from the United States to poorer countries. While that might sound like a win-win situation, it's actually a waste of taxpayer money and subversion of the free market.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, of which the U.S. is a member, such direct aid is 50 percent more expensive than food grown locally and 33 percent more expensive than food grown regionally.

I'm all for helping food get to starving people, but I'd rather help them grow the food themselves. Giving them food directly will in time make them less self-sufficient and more dependant on us.

U.S. foreign aid should be focused on developing the ability of those in poorer countries to take care of themselves. Our foreign policy should not be a money laundry for taxpayer subsidies to U.S. agribusiness.

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