

Editor's Introduction: Essay Contest Winners!

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Missourians will remember the summer of 2012 as hot and dry, browning grass and brittle leaves all too visible in the landscape. Gardeners report lackluster tomatoes, farmers anticipate disappointing yields. We've watched gray skies, hoping for rain that rarely falls. But according to **some researchers**, these conditions might actually be a new normal. Evidence suggests that parts of the United States are positioned for a "megadrought," an extended period of time with minimal rainfall.

What do these forecasts mean for our food production systems? How will people be fed in a world with exploding populations on one hand and increasingly extreme weather conditions on the other? If our current approaches are unsustainable, what alternatives should we be considering?

The University of Missouri is uniquely positioned to help lead the way in answering these questions. Our Mizzou Advantage program has identified "**Food for the Future**" as one of the University's areas of strength, drawing on the contributions of disciplines, departments, and programs across the university to develop innovative responses to this critical issue.

As a dimension of this initiative, Mizzou Advantage sponsored the essay contest portion of this issue, awarding prizes to the two essays that most effectively imagine fresh, new approaches to the ways we produce and consume food. Congratulations to the winners: Alicia Webb for "Of Men and Martians" (1st place) and Melanie Mazuc for "A Better One Mizzou: How Permaculture can Change the Campus Climate" (2nd place) whose essays won them \$700 and \$300 respectively!

Heartfelt thanks to all who submitted papers for this issue of Artifacts. May these ideas be just the beginning, seeds of abundance for our generation and those to come.

Naomi Clark



August corn in Sanborn Field,
MU's **Ag Experiment Station** ,

across the street from the
Christopher S. Bond Life
Sciences Center.



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