Why did the government divert corn into gas tanks?

In an effort to reduce reliance on foreign oil, the U.S. government mandated that biofuels, like corn-based ethanol, be developed and added to gasoline for our gas tanks. But policymakers underestimated the long-term consequences of converting food and feed into fuel.

What can I do?

Write your lawmakers to express concern about rising food prices and its link to ethanol policy. Tell your elected officials to stop using our food as fuel.

Where can I learn more?

Visit our website, cornforfoodnotfuel.com for more information about steps you can take to change our nation's policy to help consumers cope with higher prices. A free brochure called “Stretch Your Meat Dollar” is available.

Is the answer simply to import foreign oil so we don’t have to choose between food and fuel?

No, it’s in all of our best interests to develop alternatives to gasoline as fuel for our cars to decrease reliance on foreign oil. But we need to develop solutions that don’t rely on major food crops, like corn.
Why are meat and poultry prices rising?

Some consumers are questioning why meat and poultry prices are rising at the grocery store.

While many of variables contribute to food prices, there is one new underlying factor that is driving up not only meat and poultry prices, but other foods as well: the rising cost of corn.

What changed?

In 2007, the government passed a law mandating increased production of ethanol, which is most often made from corn. This diverted a huge portion of the corn crop – about 40 percent currently – away from animal feed and human food and into fuel for cars. Eventually, more than half the U.S. corn supply could be diverted into our gas tanks.

What does this have to do with meat and poultry prices?

When Congress mandated that ethanol be used in our gasoline supply in 2007, the action placed pressure on the corn supply and corn prices rose quickly – more than doubling in a matter of months.

Corn became so expensive that it was no longer profitable for many farmers and ranchers to continue feeding their livestock and poultry. Some reduced the number of animals they raised or stopped raising them altogether because it simply was not economical to purchase corn for feed. Today, fewer animals are produced for food.

Government data show that the consumer price index for meat and poultry has risen significantly over the last decade with a dramatic rise following the 2007 ethanol mandate that diverted corn into ethanol for fuel.