

# The Food *versus* Fuel Debate

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Strategies for Examining the  
Complex Set of Issues

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# My Objective Today

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Set the stage for thinking about the food versus fuel debate...today and into the future.

# Assumptions/Assertions

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- Policy has been relatively favorable to biofuels, but that could be at risk if the food versus fuel arguments win out
- As an industry, we need to:
  - understand the issues,
  - know where we stand, and
  - be able to clearly articulate our position.
- Nobody really has it all figured out

# Fundamental Arguments

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- We are not going to have enough food to meet the demands of a growing population
- People will have to pay more for food – some starve because of this
- Added pressure to grow crops for biofuels competes with land for food production
- Demand for feedstock crops will bring new land into production that should be left in its native state

## It is important to remember...

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Notwithstanding the facts, it is perception and influence that will dictate policy.

- The food versus fuel debate is complex
- Human nature is to migrate to simple, seemingly logical explanations
- Those with the most compelling sound bites will win

# Why does this discussion stir up so much passion?

- Basic needs are being challenged
  - It is about food cost and availability
  - Livelihoods are at stake (winners and losers)
  - Investments are at stake (winners and losers)
  - Way of life is at stake (winners and losers)
- This provides a lot of motivation to go to great lengths to defend one's position – and to be selective in how they set the scope of their arguments

## General Rule of Thumb

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- The more compelling the argument, the more likely that it is narrow or inconsistent in scope.

*“it is estimated that to fill one car tank with biofuel would require enough maize to feed a person for a year.”*

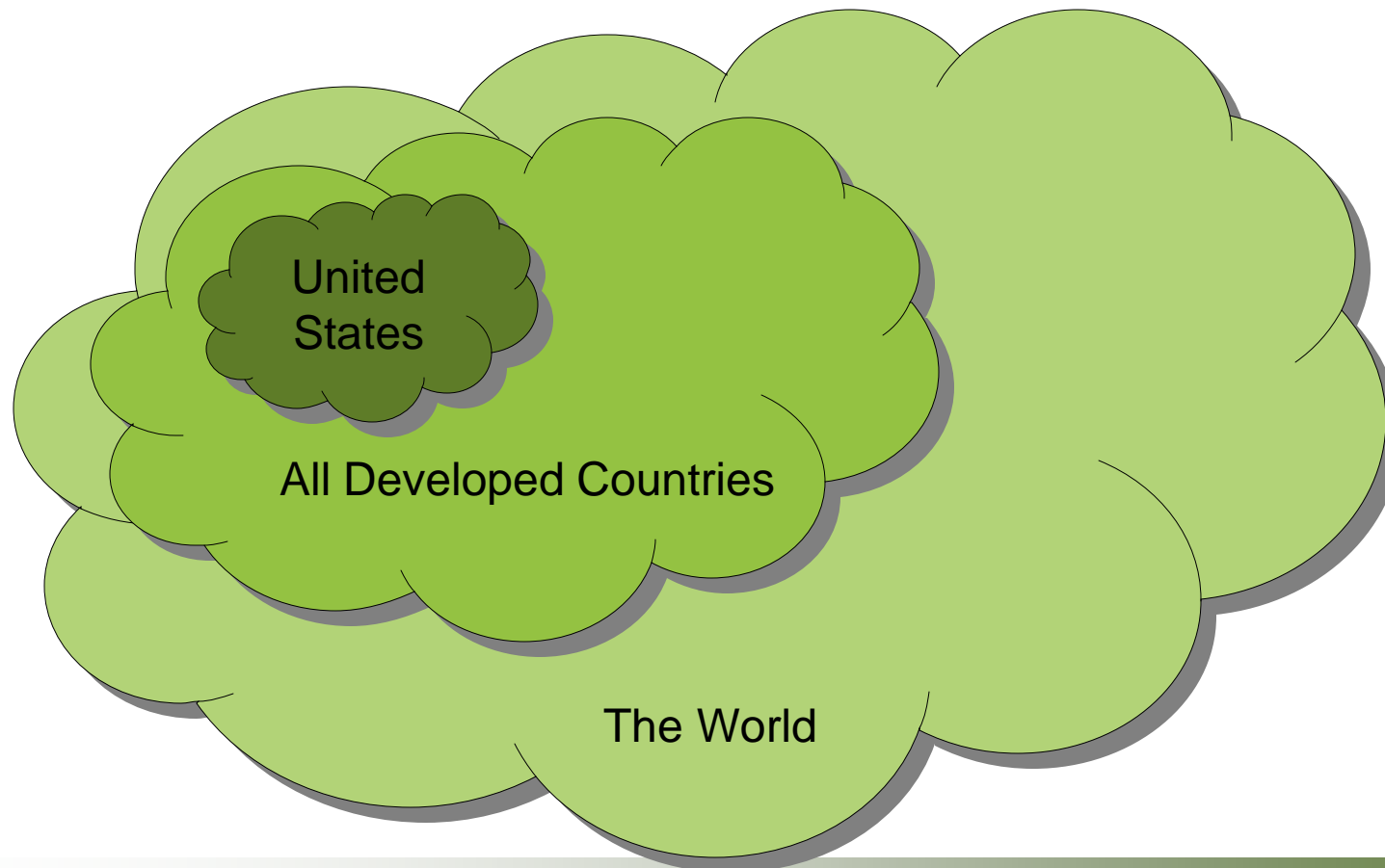
## **When you engage in thinking or discussion, focus first on the scope**

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- Geographic scope
- Demographic scope
- Economic scope
- Time scope
- Scope of fuels included

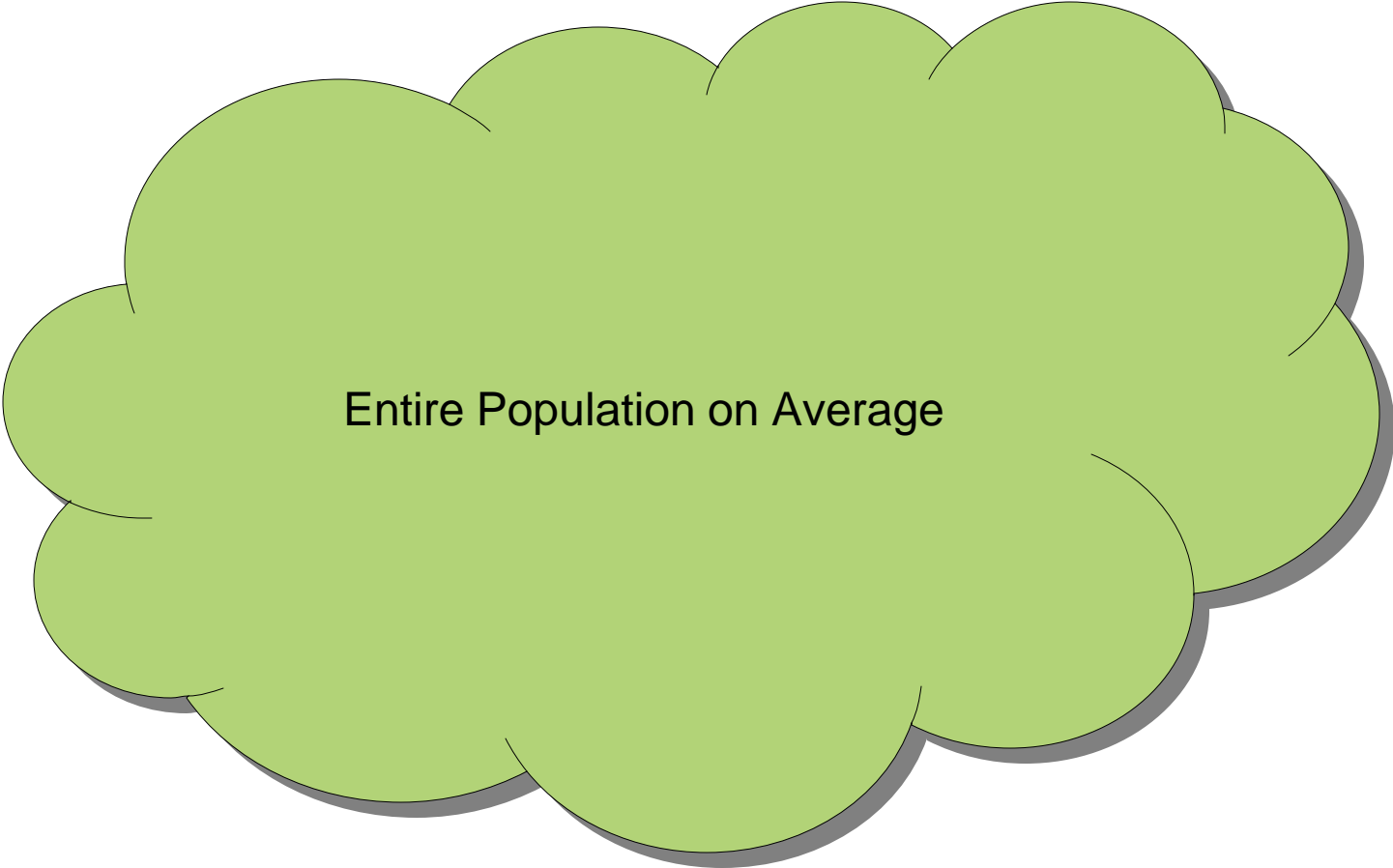
# Geographic Scope

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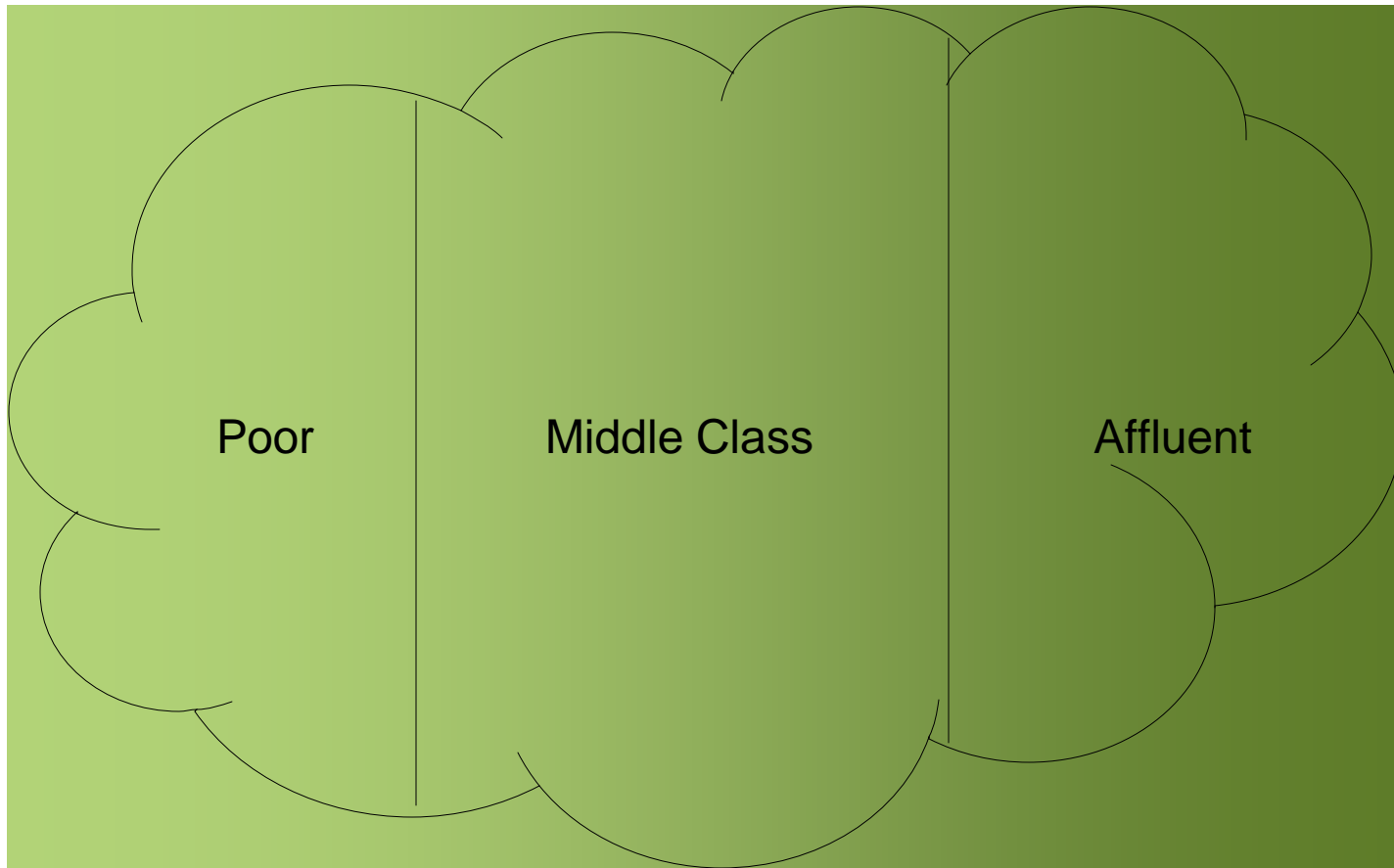
# Demographic Scope

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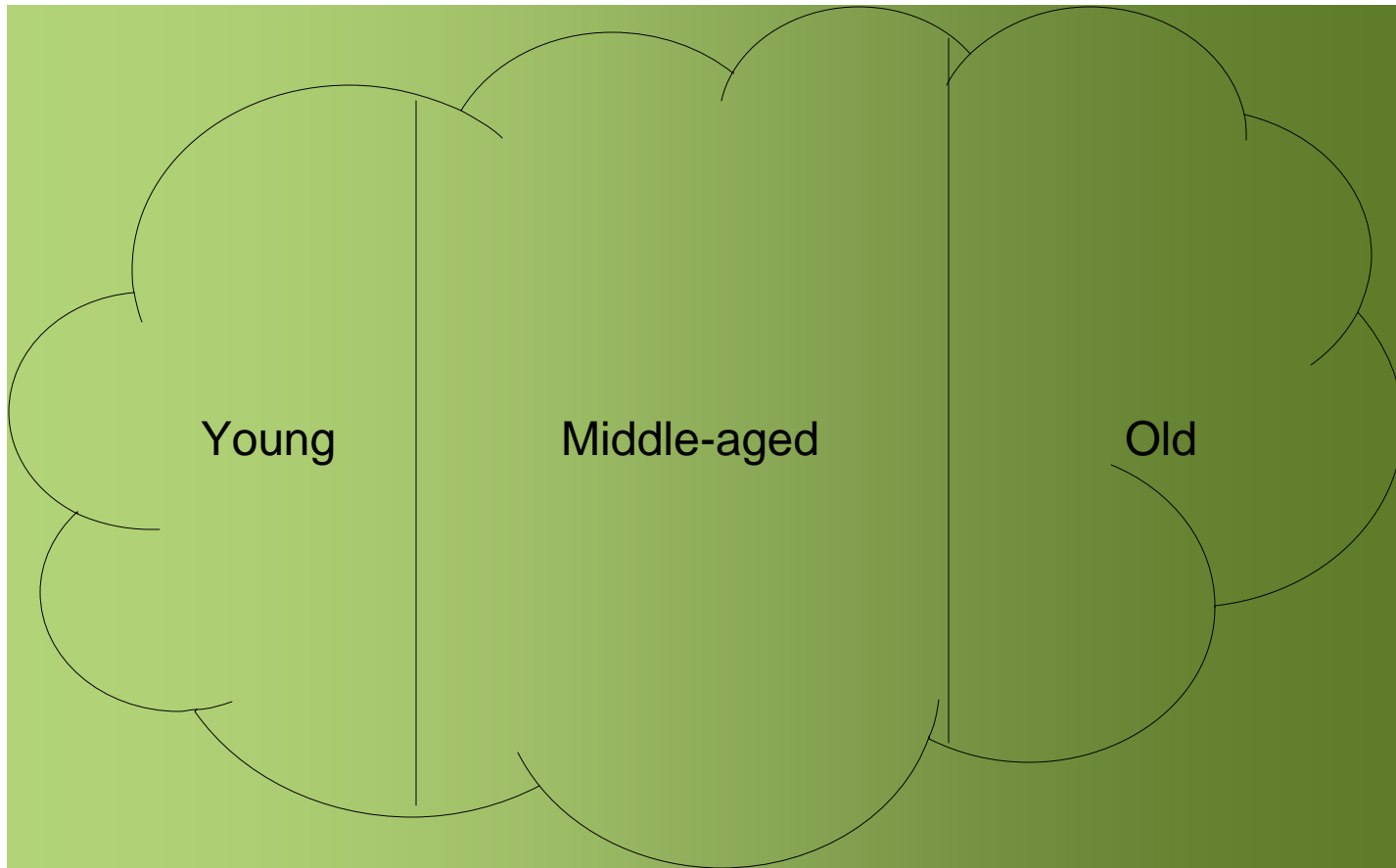


Entire Population on Average

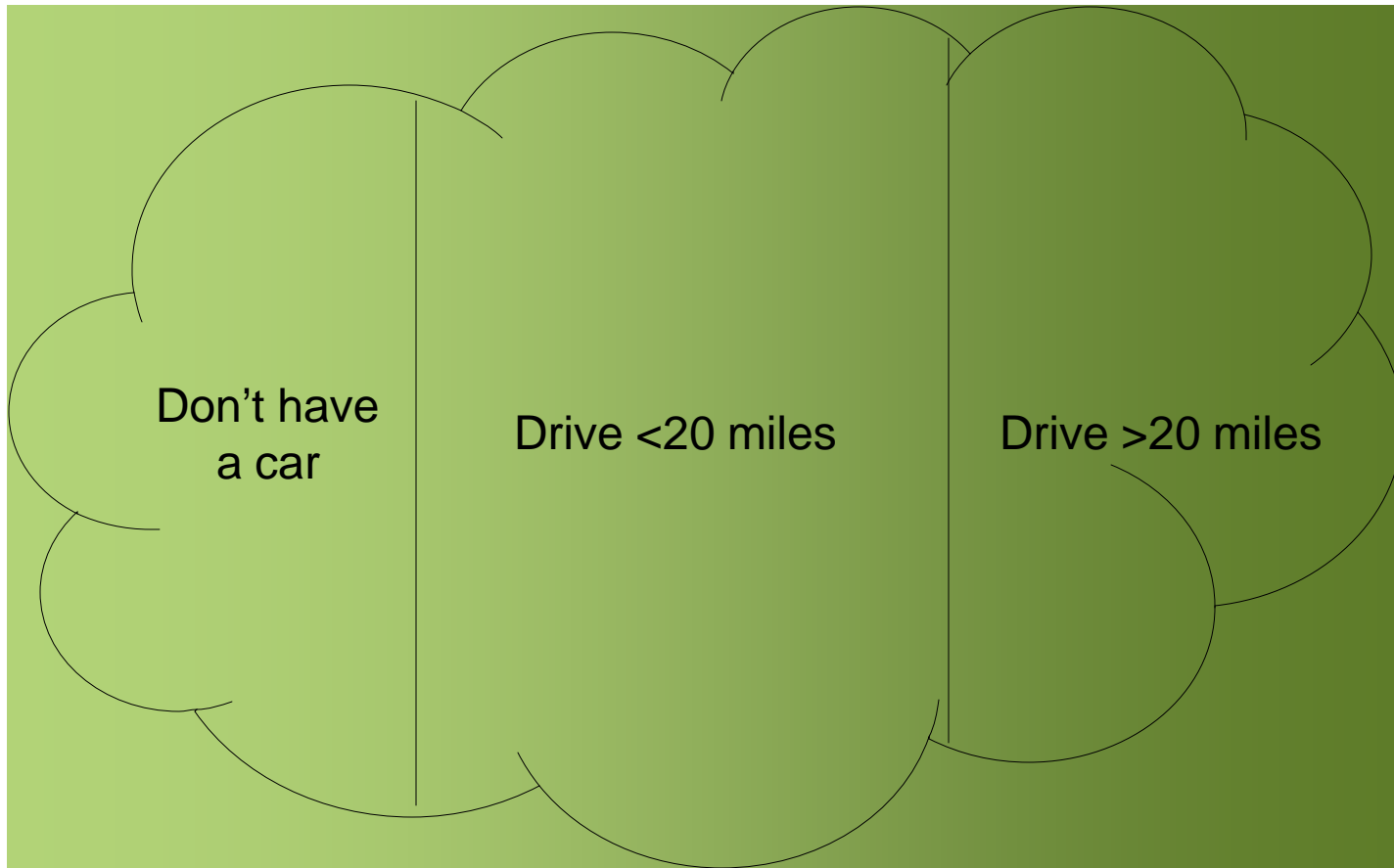
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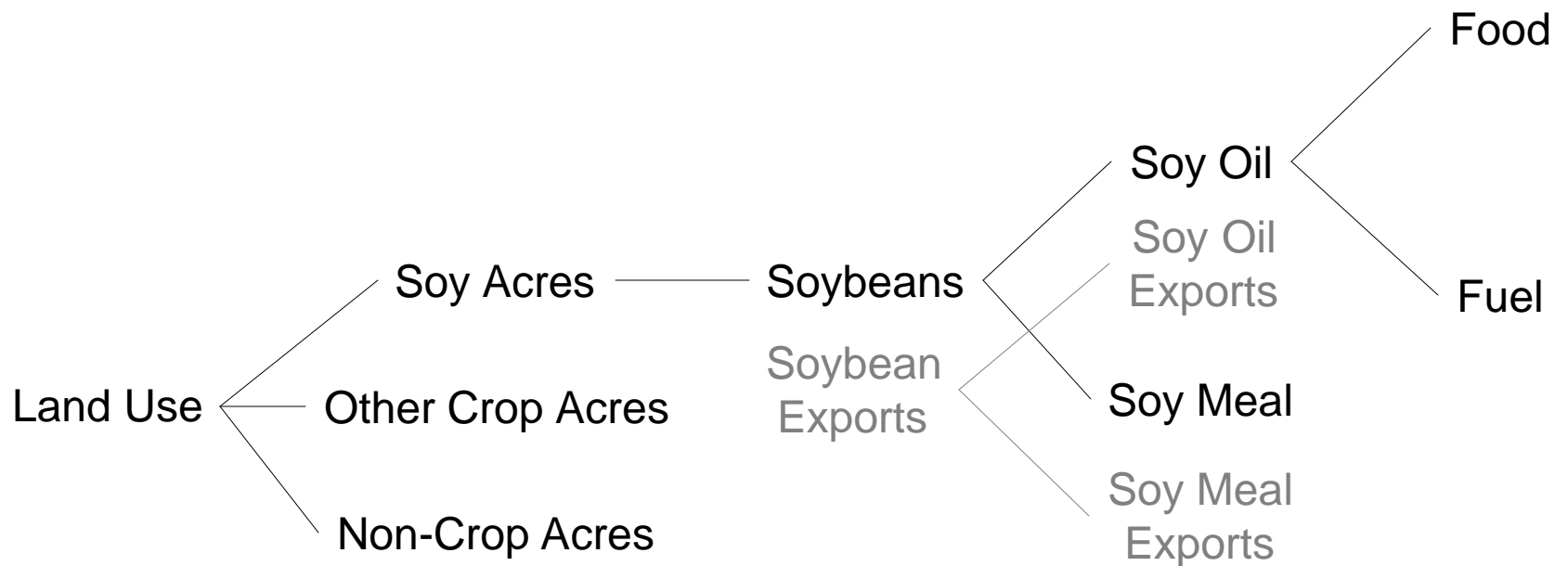


# Demographic Scope



# Economic Scope

How far back the chain are we going?



# Time Scope

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Over what time frame are we discussing?

- Short-term: First Generation Biofuels
- Intermediate-term: Second Generation Biofuels
- Long-term: Biofuels we have not even thought of yet

# Scope of Fuel Types



# Conclusion

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- We need to fight a battle just to hold our place while we figure out what is really going on
- We need to approach the debate with open minds
- The best thing you can do to understand (or disarm) arguments is to start asking questions about the scope

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