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Will U.S. Diet To Share With Hungry Areas?

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Dr. George A. Borgstrom, population expert, claims that if all the food in the world were equally distributed, all of us would be undernourished. He says that as many as two-thirds of the children in most developing countries are now suffering from malnutrition.

The world is producing more food each year and prospects are that a new record will be set in 1974. The trouble is that population is increasing, too, and people are demanding more food and better food than their ancestors had.

It took from the time of Adam until 1830 for world population to reach 1 billion. Just 100 years later, in 1930, world population was 2 billion. Just 30 years after that, in 1960, there were 3 billion people on earth. Next year, after only 15 years, the total may reach 4 billion. It's getting crowded around here—fast!

The United Nations has designated 1974 as World Population Year, in which population problems are to be examined and answers sought. The main question: "Can we produce enough to nourish everyone?"

The UN related agency, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), met in Rome last fall and adopted strategy aimed toward implementation of a world food reserve. Various versions of this idea



all come down to a scheme for stockpiling food obtained from productive nations for use by less productive nations.

Proponents argue that the "entire international community" has a responsibility to do this both on humanitarian grounds and for the economic and social stability of the world.

The question facing Americans is how far we can go before responsibility for feeding the world interferes with responsibility for nutritional wellbeing of our own people.

In a recent address, Carroll G. Brunthaver, assistant secretary of agriculture, said that world grain use has been increasing during the past six years at a rate 50 per cent higher than that of the early and mid 1960s, with gains amounting to as much as the combined annual wheat crops of Canada, Australia and Argentina.

"Nations of the world are using more grain, they buying more of what they use in the world market, and more of what they buy is coming from the United States," Brunthaver stated.

A country with a poor grain crop no longer just suffers through a famine. Most of them now go into the world market and buy what they need, as Russia and China have done. Brunthaver said "The world's food economy is running increasingly on U.S. corn and soybeans."

World demand has been responsible for \$12 soybeans, \$5 wheat, \$3 corn and 90 cent cotton during the past year. The value of agricultural exports rose by 60 per cent to the all-time high of \$12.9 billion and kept the U.S. dollar from greater devaluation.

Unless drought returns, as it has been predicted to do, wheat and feed grain exports will continue high this year. Carryover stocks of wheat will be small but it is unlikely that bread will go to a dollar a loaf, as bakers have indicated.

Many nations are building up their livestock herds, which helps to keep demand for grains strong. American stockmen will have to bid against foreign buyers to get the feed they need. If they can pass along their higher costs, meat production will be adequate.

The U.S. government no longer owns large reserves of wheat and feed grains to serve as a ceiling on the market. The government has removed or lowered price supports, and farmers are being encouraged to grow more, instead of less.

Decisions are not easily made, however, because they involve heavy investment and uncertain fuel supplies are only a part of the farmers' problems. They also must worry about getting enough fertilizer, labor, hay wire and equipment, among other things.

No matter how much American farmers produce, there are plenty of underfed people in the world who want what they grow. Supply demand, prices and politics will determine who has plenty to eat and who goes to bed hungry tonight.