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Times Need Home-Grown Solutions

ON THE 50th anniversary of the start of the "Great Depression" of the 1930s, there is uneasiness that history might be repeated.

If the fluctuating stock market, government regulations, political manipulation of money and jobs, inflation and costly energy do combine to throw the country into another depression, what will happen?

Those of us who lived through the dusty Thirties recall that many families survived by means of a 4-point, non-governmental program called "The Cow, the Sow, the Hen and the Garden."

Townspeople, as well as farmers, grew much of what they ate, spent little and made everything last a little longer.

In those days, anybody who kept a cow could sell whole raw milk to neighbors, or to a cream-buying station. The local butcher would buy pigs and calves. The grocer usually would pay a nickel a dozen more for eggs if they were exchanged for merchandise. Surplus garden truck could be swapped to neighbors.

Now cream buying stations are gone and installations required to handle milk are so costly it might take upwards of 100 cows to justify the investment. Pigs could be sold in small lots, but in a settled area a grower might have trouble getting approval of his environmental impact statement.

Supermarkets now look for eggs and vegetables in wholesale quantities large enough to advertise in a string of stores and aren't interested in small supplies of variable quality.

Considerable numbers of city workers have moved to rural acreages to grow some of their food, but there is good reason to believe it would take a more disastrous depression than has been forecast to cause most Americans to undertake enterprises demanding as much time and work as the cow, sow, hen and garden require.

As usual, economists differ in their observations. Most of us prefer to accept "positive opinions" of those who say, "There probably

won't be a depression right now, maybe; at least, not a bad one, perhaps!"

One sign of the times is that many people are being persuaded to convert cash into "tangible investments," meaning land, gold, diamonds, art, antique collections, medallions, etc.

These items are claimed to be more secure than depressed dollars, although those who presently own such tangibles appear to be willing enough to sell them for mere money.

A contrary trend is reported by pawnbrokers, who say business is picking up among people who want to convert tangibles into cash by hocking personal possessions.

However, when it comes to converting either cash or tangibles into something essential, like food, you can't beat the cow, the sow, the hen and the garden. Somebody has to grow the food. It could be you.

Growing food is an undertaking that has never been accomplished by government bureaus, appropriations and regulations!