

Why Starvation Need Never Happen

FOR 200 years anthropologists have feared the world eventually would be unable to produce enough food for its increasing population. We are rapidly coming closer but this need never happen.

In 1798 a 32-year old Englishman, Robert Malthus, published a 50,000-word pamphlet that became known as the "Malthusian Theory." His reasoning was that people would rather produce children than grow food. Most of the so-called "Developing Nations" seem to be determined to prove that he was right.

Experts say world population is increasing by 250,000 people per day and that 90 percent of the increase is occurring in the poorer nations. During the past 15 years world food production has increased almost one-third, but per capita food supplies have increased only about 5 percent.

Recently I was visiting with Darold Butler, who has been farming just north of Pauls Valley for over 50 years, taking part in agricultural and community affairs. While recuperating from a severe illness he began intensive garden-

ing for exercise and activity.

Butler obtained improved seed from top-notch plant varieties, poured water and fertilizer to them and came up with fantastic results. His photographs showed what can be done on a small acreage.

He raised three pumpkins that weighed a total of 408 pounds. One 150-pounder was given to the Homesteaders Farm Club for a Garvin County 4-H Achievement banquet. It made 51 pies.

He grew huge cabbages, one weighing 14½ pounds, cantaloupes up to 14 pounds, and sweet potatoes at 7 pounds apiece.

Butler had 12 tomato plants called "Super Hybrid Colossal." Vines spread out 6 to 8 feet in diameter as he gave them frequent doses of 3-18-18 liquid fertilizer. Many of the fruit weighed from one to two pounds each and he sold \$425 worth to a local restaurant, besides those consumed by his family and friends. At season's end he gathered seven bushels of green tomatoes for relishes.

While actively farming, Butler raised excellent crops of corn and

alfalfa. His top Red Angus gained 4½ pounds a day in an official test, compared to normally good gains of 3 pounds daily.

Butler's vegetables show what one man not in his prime physically did for fun. Couldn't a family needing food do as well?

Similar possibilities for helping to feed themselves should be available to the thousands said to be going hungry in the United States, or to the millions starving around the world. They need a piece of land, water, seed and motivation. The scarcest of these items is motivation — a willingness to work for what they eat.

Oklahoma has never grown as much food as could be produced here just by applying present technology and solving marketing and pricing problems. Further improvements lie ahead if we can just keep research going at Oklahoma State University.

There is no need for hunger in our world of plenty, if people would spend more time raising food and less producing babies they can't feed.