

FAO warns: no more food for emergency relief

In its 1988 year-end report, the Rome-based United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization warned that world cereal grains output has been so low in recent crop seasons that centralized food reserves usually available for emergency situations have been exhausted. According to FAO head Edouard Saouma on Dec. 19, the world food crisis is at a turning point, and could become a calamity, if food stocks are not replenished during 1989.

Saouma said that world cereal production has declined for two years in a row, for the first time since the end of the Second World War. From an estimated world output of 1.8 billion tons a few years ago, total world cereals output in 1988 is estimated at 1.532 billion tons.

Saouma described 1988 as a year of vast damage to crops from droughts, hurricanes, floods, and locust plagues—damage so bad that better harvests in certain parts of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East could not offset the losses. World food stocks, he said, are at the lowest levels since the early 1970s, and are below the minimum required for adequate food security. The African locust plague is now raging to a degree never recorded in history.

According to Saouma, whatever emergency food aid is being given at present, is “hand to mouth.” Many countries urgently needing food imports don’t have the money to pay for them.

Saouma called the situation “grim.” In its monthly reports last fall, the FAO projected a need for increasing world cereals output in 1989 by at least 13%—or about 210 to 240 million tons of grain. At present, there is no national or international mobilization to accomplish this goal.

On Dec. 20, the United Nations International Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF) released a report which surveyed the high death rate among the world’s children from malnutrition and related causes. Released in New Delhi, the report said, “Some 14 million children are still dying each year from common illnesses and undernutrition. . . . The social progress of decades is being brought to a halt, and, in some cases, thrown into reverse.”

The UNICEF Secretariat has called for an international summit conference in early 1989 to address emergency measures to reduce the death toll.

condominium” dealings. For the Russians, they test the Western liberal elites by demanding ever more outrageous terms of concession from Western governments. This is the real reason for that “Grain Robbery,” not the fabrication that in 1972-73 the U.S. government and cartel traders such as Cargill and Continental were “tricked” by clever Russian traders, about how large Russian purchases were. Kissinger and the Anglo-American establishment knew then, and know today, down to the last kernel of corn, what the Russians were and are grabbing from scarce Western reserves.

Figure 3 shows the dramatic percentage increase in Soviet and Chinese imports of U.S. wheat from 1987 to 1988.

Today, the Western world has undergone the largest reduction of grain reserve stocks on record in the current harvest year 1988-89, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other estimates. North America, the world’s traditional “reserve” for all grain and grain substitutes such as the vital soybean, has been devastated by the most severe drought in this century, even more severe than the famous drought of the 1932-33 years.

U.S. corn, wheat, and soybean stocks have fallen 66%, 60%, and 66% respectively. Being the world’s number one exporter of grain, this shortfall has a major impact on the availability of food for all food importing nations. Less Developed Countries (LDCs) in Africa and elsewhere, will be severely affected, as many with the largest need for food have been hit by losses in food production from weather calamities and reduced credits from international banks needed to buy imported food. **Table 2** shows the major cereals-importing nations, and the annual tonnage of grain they import as an average of the last five years.

Yet the U.S. government continues to provide massive export subsidy payments to export scarce grain and food supplies to Russia, playing “Russian roulette” with Western world food security. The sinister depths of the deal are further confirmed by the fact that world grain reserves are so short, cereals stocks levels are now estimated now to have fallen below the 17% of use, which the FAO considers the “minimum necessary to safeguard global food security.”

The world’s second most important grain supplier, the European Community, has just decided to impose further crop reductions through price and acreage reduction penalties to reduce the EC harvest in 1989. This is similar to the USDA programs which in 1988 took 80 million acres out of production, 24 million of which will lay idle and not be cropped for 10 years.

EC agriculture policy, like USDA Washington policy, is effectively determined by the establishment that controls the multinational cartel grain trading companies. This “establishment” has decided to prop up Gorbachov at all costs. The Russian leadership, as they did in 1972, has decided to “test” how far the Western elites are prepared to go in this by secretly making deals to further endanger Western food security.