

EIR Feature

Will your child go hungry this year?

by Marcia Merry

On Feb. 9 and 10, both the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Rome-based U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization released their latest estimates of world harvests, crop projections, and food stocks, which show rates of decline in world cereals output, and drawdown of stocks way past the danger point. It is time to worry whether your child will go hungry this year.

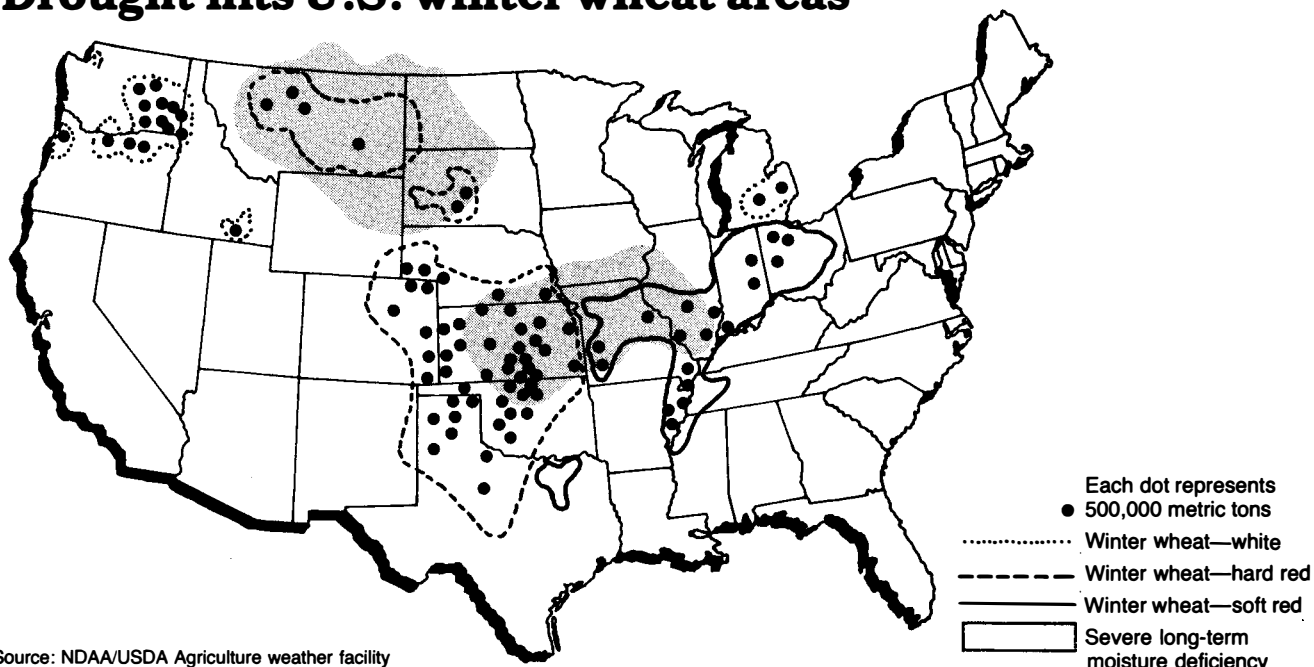
The Feb. 10 U.N. report, "Food Outlook," forecasts that the level of production required to raise stocks from already low levels will not be accomplished. In November last year, the U.N. Global Warning Service had called for an expansion of world cereals output by about 230 million metric tons during the upcoming 1989-90 crop year, in order to begin to meet daily needs, and also to replenish depleted stocks. This represents an increase of about 13% over total cereals output in recent years. To produce such an increase would have taken a war mobilization-style effort among nations, to expand land in cultivation and guarantee needed inputs per acre.

No such effort has been made. At the same time, key parts of the world food basket farm zones have been hit by killing weather conditions. The U.N. report cited the lack of moisture, inadequate snow cover, and extremely low temperatures affecting the winter wheat crop in the United States. On average, the U.S. accounts for 37% of all the annual world wheat traded each year. Poor weather for the U.S. wheat season is automatically a shortfall of wheat for the world. Adverse weather is also affecting the grain crops in southern Europe, northern Africa, and China.

After the killer drought last summer in North America, which brought down corn output by close to 40%, and similarly reduced other food export crops such as edible beans, a worldwide food crisis came about. Bountiful harvests in the Southern Hemisphere could have begun to reverse the decline in cereals output. But this has not happened. The Australian and Argentine wheat harvests were both reduced by drought. Recent rains may help the corn and soybeans now growing in Brazil and Argentina, but still the grain deficit remains.

The FAO estimates that overall cereals stocks for the world have now sunk below the safeguard level for world food security, which the U.N. sets at 18% of

Drought hits U.S. winter wheat areas



Source: NDA/USDA Agriculture weather facility

consumption. Military and logistics experts advise nations to maintain over 12 months of food supplies as adequate security.

The Feb. 9 USDA "World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates," reports that total world grain output in the last three years has been dropping from 1.685 billion metric tons in 1986-87, down to 1.605 billion metric tons in 1987-88, to 1.55 billion tons in 1988-89. (The crop year ends after the Southern Hemisphere harvests.) In USDA record keeping, world cereals stocks are at the lowest level since 1977-78, which means that the per capita cereals supply has fallen drastically.

A rational response to this situation would be to "plant like crazy," and to take all the other necessary stopgap measures, such as reviewing the condition and type of food stocks, and allocating for domestic and export use based on keeping everyone alive, while provision is made to restore food output to needed levels.

Just the opposite has happened. Government officials, from Soviet leader Gorbachov to Secretary of State James Baker, have stressed "ecology" and "saving the Earth" as priorities. The new U.S. cabinet includes such radical environmentalists as William Reilly, former head of the Conservation Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund, which oppose expanding food, or, for that matter, the human race. A new policy document released by the Agriculture Department in January, "A National Program for Soil and Water Conservation," states that the USDA places top priority on restricting agriculture, to preserve soils and water.

On both sides of the Atlantic, land set-aside policies are

being enforced, in the name of "conservation of the environment," and "stabilizing prices and prevent surpluses." This February, the USDA began a drive to lock up more of their land in the government's Conservation Reserve Program, which has already claimed 28.1 million acres. The CRP is aiming to get over 45 million crop acres out of production—over 10% of the acreage base in the United States. In Western Europe, the EC is enforcing its first-ever land set-aside program on 11 of the 12 EC member-nations, even tiny Luxembourg. At least 500,000 hectares, or 1.24 million crop acres will be idled. In the Third World, the International Monetary Fund is enforcing the same process by refusing to permit land improvement or high-technology inputs.

The abrogation of power by an international commodities and financial cartel, operating above nations, and—to the doom of us all—above the laws of nature, is the fundamental thing here. It is in the perceived self-interest of this circle that both food, which they intend to control, and people, become scarce. Prominent are such as Armand Hammer, owner of IBP, the largest beef processor in the United States, Dwayne Andreas, head of Archer-Daniels-Midland/Toepfer, the largest soybean processor in the world, Henry Kissinger, on the board of Continental, one of the top five international grain brokers (along with Cargil, Bunge, Louis Dreyfus.)

The following review of world climate patterns, current weather reports from crop zones, and an analysis of wheat lands taken out of production show that set-aside is genocide. We either restore cultivation and bounty to the Earth, or the result will be deterioration of the climate itself, famine, and death.