

Crops Revolution May Save Human Race

WASHINGTON -- A "green revolution" conducted quickly in places like Purdue and Michigan State Universities is giving the human race one last chance to avoid famine on a world wide scale.

Agencies of the Federal government and organizations such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in Battle Creek have added their weight to this revolution in crops and agricultural methods and new concepts of nutrition.

This revolution never makes the headlines which focus on great world political figures and issues of war and peace, but in many ways what American agronomists and other experts are doing in the field of agriculture constitutes one of the most significant developments of our times.

These people and the organizations that back them are trying to prevent untold agony for humanity. They know they are racing against time, but they feel they have a fighting chance to win.

SURPRISINGLY more people are aware of the dark projection of the future than the bright one.

For some time now gloomy prophets have been saying that world population increases soon will outstrip food production. They have fixed the period between 1975 and 1985 as the start of the great famine which they foresee as striking initially at the most crowded and least developed of the emerging nations. Some have even said that where you have teeming millions, as in India, the race already is lost.

This is disputed by William S. Gaud, administrator of the Agency for International Development (AID). He told a recent conference of editors and broadcasters at the State Department:

"I don't believe the battle is lost. There are many people in this country and abroad who are working hard on the food problem. It is true that we still have a long way to go, but it should be remembered that in 1967 world agriculture set a new record for production with much of the rise due to increased output in the developing countries."

That is where the laboratories and experimental fields at Purdue and Michigan State enter the picture. Just this time the experts have produced technological breakthroughs that have crowded back the shadow of famine. Some of these discoveries represent the successful conclusion of a quarter of a century or more of experimentation. AID has rushed the results to new countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

NEW "WONDER STRAINS" of wheat, rice, corn, sorghum and millet feed three, four and even five times the return of the old types in some places. These strains often have shorter stalks and more grain. They are more resistant to pests. Their growing rate is faster. In some hot countries local farmers can get two or three crops a year now that the growing period has been cut from over 200 days to around 120 days.

Gaud explained that the new budget AID is asking Congress to authorize the spending of \$2.5 billion for all types of economic assistance by the agency. Of this \$800 million will be earmarked to increase agricultural production in developing countries.

The \$800 million figure represents 40 per cent more than AID actually was allowed to spend for such a purpose in the current budget. A few years ago the agency's program to improve agricultural

methods, construct irrigation projects and the like amounted to only \$250 million annually. Immense as these figures seem, Gaud explained that the Federal government's activities could only represent part of the answer in fighting hun-

ger in the poorer areas of the world. New farming methods call for a vast expansion in the use of fertilizer, Gaud said the government would like to see private industry take a larger role in the construction of fertilizer

plants overseas. THE KNOW-HOW of American industry would be a decided plus. But he conceded that there were problems. An anti-business attitude prevails in some of the emerging coun-

tries which makes it hard for private enterprise managers to get their teeth into the problem. The red tape in a foreign country can be beyond belief. Grafting local officials can be a problem. It is easier for an

American firm to make money at home or in Western Europe than to fight these conditions. Yet many American concerns are working at the problem. On the bright side Gaud said 16 million acres of the "wonder strains" of grain were planted in

Asia this year with the expectation that more than double that acreage will be planted next year. He thought India could be self-sufficient in food grains in the next three or four years if things break right and that Pakistan might be self-sufficient in

another year. But he added a warning. The "green revolution" just buys time. Ultimately the population explosion will have to be controlled before the battle to feed humanity can be said to have been finally won.

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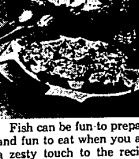
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FISH-IN-FOIL

2 lbs. frozen or fresh fish fillets (sole or flounder)
2 tbsps. A.I. Sauce
1 tsp. lemon juice
¼ lb. butter or margarine

Melt butter in saucepan, stir in A.I. Sauce, lemon juice. Brush on fillets generously. Enclose loosely in aluminum foil. Bake at 350° for about 20 minutes, then sprinkle with paprika. Serves 4.