

AGRICULTURAL REPORT

USDA TASK FORCE REPORT PINS BLAME FOR HIGH MEAT PRICES ON WORKERS

Oct. 24 (IPS)--A special task force of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the farm-retail price spreads for red meat has released a report aimed at pitting farmers against workers, particularly the Amalgamated Meatcutters and the Teamsters Union. The report, which has been presented to Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, stresses increased efficiency and productivity in meat marketing as a key measure for reducing retail meat prices. The task force members hope to dupe farmers and consumers into believing that it is meat packers and truck drivers who are to blame for current outrageous prices rather than Rockefeller-engineered depression policies.

The following suggestions, geared to speeding up and laying off workers as a "solution" to the price crisis, are excerpted from a sub-section of the report entitled "Ways to Increase Efficiency and Productivity in Meat Marketing":

(1) Encourage packers and retailers to shift further to box beef and central meat cutting;

(2) Increase USDA research and educational efforts to assist the meat industry and food retailers in identifying cost savings through box beef and central meat cutting;

(3) Encourage the National Livestock and Meat Board to promote consumer acceptance of frozen beef;

(5) Allow truck tractors to pull two trailers on interstate highways; and

(6) Provide assistance and information for labor-management negotiations to encourage productivity-related changes.

NEW YORK TIMES ESCALATES ATTACK ON BUTZ

Oct. 23 (IPS)--The maneuvers to oust Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz prior to the upcoming World Food Conference in Rome have been escalating. The lead editorial of yesterday's New York Times, "No WIN With Butz," was the latest in a series of "Watergating" activities against the Agricultural Secretary. Earlier anti-Butz actions have included making Butz the fall guy in the export controls imposed against the Soviet Union's grain purchases, charging Butz with negligence by failing to produce a report on the Dairy Lea Co-operative legal battle, and failing to comply with legal regulations concerning the USDA-administered Food Stamp Program.

The Times editorial bitterly complains that Butz is sabotaging the World Food Conference: "Agriculture Secretary Butz, who will lead the United States delegation to the world food conference in Rome next month, has stressed that he does not want this country to 'overcommit' itself there....So far, the United States seems to have developed no major food policy other than to keep a low profile in Rome and to cling to the free market system. While he is out on the political hustings, President Ford is permitting Secretary Butz to lead the Administration toward a major diplomatic fiasco in a field in which the United States is pre-eminently equipped to propose sound policies for an ever more interdependent world."

The Times' real complaint, as the quoted material implies, is that neanderthal Butz has failed to adopt the Rockefeller starvation policies of international food reserves and labor-intensive slave labor agriculture. Whether or not the Rockefeller forces succeed in dumping Butz in the next few weeks, Rockefeller's stooges within the delegation, especially Secretary of State Kissinger, will be calling the shots.

EEC EXPORT CUTS THREATEN EUROPEAN FARMERS, SOVIETS

Oct. 23 (IPS)--Pierre Lardinois, Commissioner of the European Economic Community's Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), has unleashed another round of attacks against farmers and workers. In a move described as aimed to reduce the consumption of grain, Lardinois presented his proposals to Farm Ministers from the nine member nations of the EEC. The proposals, which follow a beef import ban and other provocative measures aimed at reducing high-quality protein food supplies, include a drastic cutback of pig and poultry production and the elimination of all grain exports to developed nations, with special emphasis placed upon the Soviet Union.

A U.S. Request

Lardinois motivated his starvation policies by stating compliance with a U.S. request: "They have asked us to be prudent in our export policy because of shortages. I think we have done what they asked," he said. Lardinois also played upon the Farm Ministers' guilt in getting them to agree to these suicidal measures. Lardinois said that the Common Market must not stand accused of using precious world grain supplies to feed livestock at a time when other parts of the world were in danger of starvation. Within this context, he announced that only famine-stricken countries would receive EEC grain.

This recent EEC action has a dual thrust. It will reduce the diet of the European working class and it follows Rockefeller's lead announcing the end of detente with the Soviet Union by singling out the Soviet Union for harsh cuts. The elimination of grain exports to developed countries will strike a hard blow against the