

Good Morning: 3,336 People Starved Last Night

Part I

ED NOTE: "Good Morning: 3,336 People Starved Last Night", is taken from a report by George C. Tolls, Manager of the Washington operation of Computer Usage Company, Inc. The report is titled, "Computers And Food".

PART I

Many experts are becoming acutely concerned with the population vs. food problem. In a full page advertisement in the New York Times recently, the headline read, "Good Morning While you were asleep last night, 3,336 people died from starvation." The ad, which was placed by the Campaign to Check the Population Explosion, came right to the point. From the time we go to bed, to the time we get up each morning an estimated 3,336 people in undeveloped nations die of illness caused by malnutrition. Mostly children.

Hard facts to believe in a country where the food problem is viewed as too many calories

But the United Nations estimates that more than 300-million children are retarded physically—and in some cases mentally—because of a deficiency of proteins and calories in their diets.

Recently, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations conducted its third world food survey. The survey concluded that although the quality of average food diets had improved slightly since before the second world war, up to one half (about 15 billion) of the world population suffered from hunger or malnutrition, or both.

Since then, world population has continued to increase by 8,000 every hour or approximately 70 million people per year. A number equal to the population of France, Belgium and Holland taken together is added every year to the people living on this earth. It is estimated that the population of the world, which in the year 1900 was only 1.5 billion, will be close to 7 billion by the year 2,000 (and that estimate is considered by many to be conservative). Experts estimate

that food production has to be tripled by the year 2,000 to provide adequately for all the world's inhabitants.

Here's the impact population growth has on food production. The much publicized Aswan Dam in Egypt, built by Russia, is one of the most spectacular leaps forward in food production anywhere in the world. The dam increased Egypt's agricultural production by 15 percent—a boon for the starving fellahin. The somber truth, however, is that during the 12 years it took to build the dam, Egypt's population increased 35 percent.

The dimensions of the food problem are staggering.

- America's granaries—once spilling over with surplus—are down to the reserve point, considered adequate for our own needs, right now.

- U.S. cities take at least 15 million acres of open land each year—50 percent more than a decade ago—reducing prime farmland.

- Barring major war or famine, the World will be "standing room only" by the time the 21st Century rolls around. More people will be alive in 2,000 A.D. than all the preceding generations combined.

While the sociological and biological implications of this are incomprehensible, nothing is even remotely as important as the problem of feeding this multitude.

While America's crop yield continues to improve the world's situation worsens. Latin America, with the highest birthrate in the world, is actually producing less food today than 10 years ago.

Meeting the Problem

Fortunately, as the problem grows so do the means of meeting it. Modern technology has already put into man's hands some of the tools necessary to solve the problem:

- Research into new varieties of plants and livestock which produce a much greater yield than the varieties they replaced;

- New agricultural machinery and ways of automated farming which will produce more food with less human effort.

- Modern methods of forest management, and scores of radically new forest products;

- New fish-finding and fish-catching techniques, and new ways of getting the catch to the consumer in the freshest condition.

- Research into cultivating seaweed and other forms of algae

— "mariculture" — which are rich in protein.

All this and other similar developments are designed to meet the threat of this simple but menacing equation—if food production continues merely to match growth of population, there will be about twice as many hungry people in the world in the year 2,000 as there are today.

It looks pretty somber. But technology in the United States has already taken huge strides in increasing food production and developing economic systems for farmers. A closer look at American utilization of modern farm technology may provide some clues to broader applications in less productive areas of the world. The main thrust of U.S. agriculture has been to increase efficiency in the production of present food. The biggest single advance is the use of computers in agriculture. In fact, experts predict computer usage in agriculture will be widespread by 1975.

A Close Up: The Computer On the Farm

When the Rural Electrification Program was put into effect in the 1930's most people thought it was simply a Depression "make-work" program. It is doubtful that anyone thought the wall outlet in the quaint farm (Continued on Page 8)



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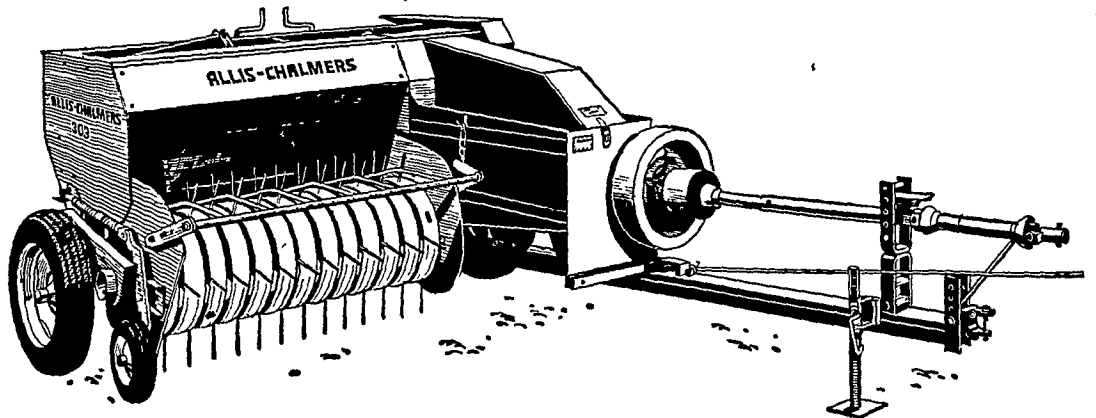
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