

Lancaster Farming Ads Pay

Conservation Corner



he that ploweth should plow in hope

IRRIGATION

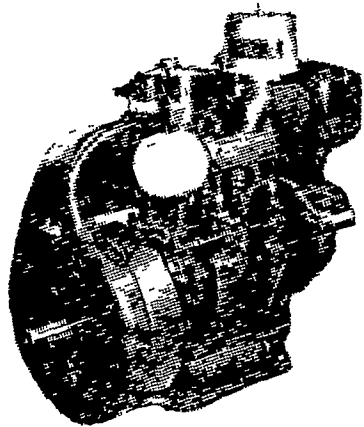
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Study Shows Cuban Agriculture Can't Soon Go It Alone

Cuban farm production, still running much below its pre-Revolutionary level, is not capable of achieving its potential in the next 5-10 years without continued foreign financial and technical aid, and a corps of agricultural specialists, according to a report issued recently by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The survey of Cuban agriculture by USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that country's 1968 production index at 80, compared with the 1957-59 base period of 100. The downturn, caused by Revolutionary

upheaval to the overall economy and inefficient and scarce farm labor, pushed the per capita farm output about 35 percent under the 1959 mark.

Production goals set by the Cuban government for sugar, rice, coffee, cocoa, and livestock are apparently unrealistic for the next 5-10 years, according to the report, unless there are extensive resource improvements, trained workers, and considerable financial and technical assistance from abroad. Cuban leaders have called for a nearly impossible production of 10 million metric tons of raw sugar in 1970. "Volunteers" recruited from cities, the military, and schools do not adequately off-set the lack of skilled farm workers.

Additional limitations are imposed by a cumbersome bureaucratic process that frequently changes and confuses farm operation plans.

The report, however, does credit Cuban agriculture with sufficient land and natural resources to achieve an upswing in farm output, given enough time and resources. This progress assumes greater use of fertilizer, better irrigation, and more mechanization. Cattle numbers have increased in recent years, and all basic foods except wheat and fats and oils could be provided for domestic consumers. Presently, per capita meat and dairy supplies are below pre-Revolutionary levels and food imports (Continued on Page 22)

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