

Aid Official Stresses Role Of Plant Food Industry

A high official of the U.S. foreign aid program called on the American fertilizer industry recently to increase its investments in developing nations seeking to boost food production.

Beit Tollefson, Jr., Assistant Administrator of the Agency for International Development for Legislative and Public Affairs, addressed the annual conference of the National Plant Food Institute at Miami, Fla., on the "important role" that private enterprise is playing in international development.

tion that fertilizer has made to higher food production in countries assisted by AID, Tollefson said the Agency believes that investment in fertilizer plants should be largely financed by private industry. To achieve that goal, he explained, AID has lent more than \$100 million to fertilizer projects abroad, has covered \$40 million of investment in such plants with extended risk guarantees, and has issued \$170 million of political risk guarantees.

But the rapid growth of fertilizer consumption — averaging

16 percent annually over the last five years in the less developed nations — suggests that "significant new plant construction must be undertaken," said Tollefson.

"Even an expansion of fertilizer to a level of 127 million tons by 1975," said AID's Assistant Administrator, "would supply only about half the fertilizer needed to meet a consumption target in the less developed countries of 19 million tons. The rest, some 8 million to 9 million tons annually, will have to be covered by imports at an estimated cost of \$800 million or more — a three-fold increase over the present AID-financed procurement program."

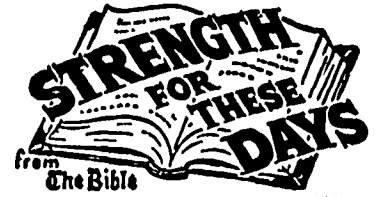
Tollefson said AID expenditures for fertilizer procurement now approximate \$200 million a year — the largest single use of AID funds in the foreign assistance program.

Under this Administration, he added, AID is also committed to greater support of technical assistance "including efforts to build local competence in agricultural research and improve agricultural extension services."

AID is collaborating with the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations in supporting international seed-research centers, he told the conference. Centers in the Philippines, Mexico and Columbia which have produced new varieties of high-yield seeds are being encouraged to give greater attention to fertilizer problems as well.

fertilizer research and soil testing capabilities.

"Distribution is another aspect of the problem," Tollefson reported. "It is AID's policy to promote the distribution of fertilizer through private channels."



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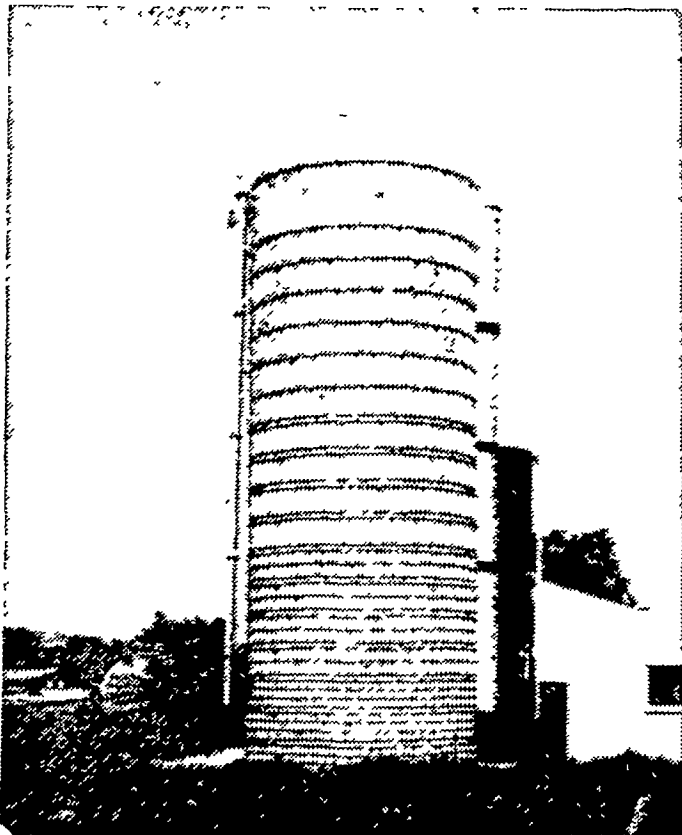
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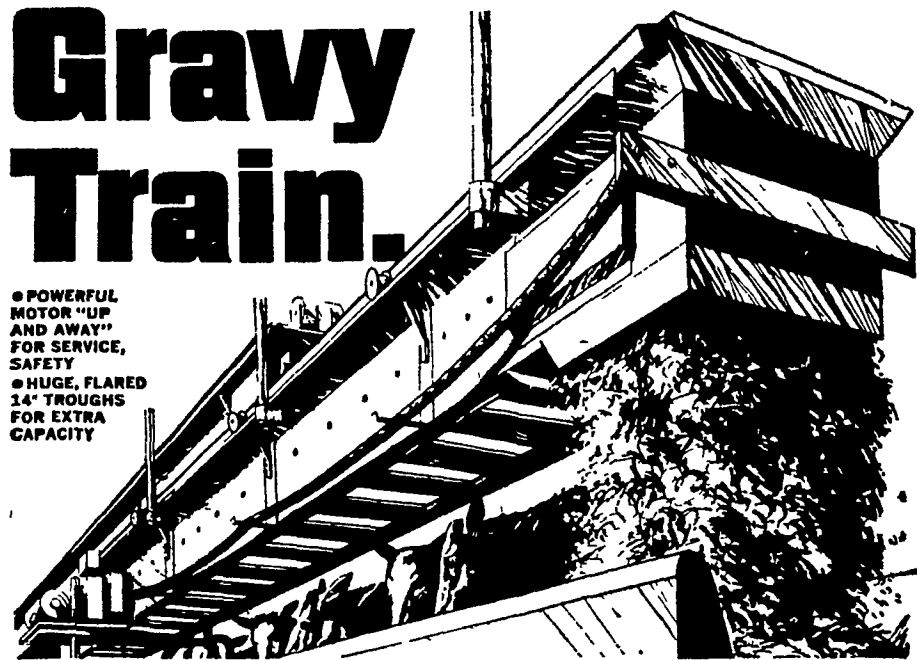
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