Pushed by Rising Labor Costs

Mechanization Seen for Vegetables

bor costs, increasing shares of crops. **U**S. vegetable crops are being mechanized.

The future is not so bright for fruits, however, since mechanization for funts and **muts is expected to lag**

production expands sharply, to further mechanization in that tal labor needs are expected to cherry production - which is remain stable, despite increas- already about 50 per cent comed mechanization.

These trends of rising labor tosts and increased mechanization can be expected to continue through 1975, according going to mean a big cutback in per cent fewer man-hours-229 to the USDA's Statistical Re- fruit and vegetable labor needs, porting Service.

In the past two decades both hand labor and machinery have production is likely by 1975 gone up in price. But labor's and most of that gain will be in sost has climbed about 50 per fiuits and nuts where mechani- million hours. cent faster since 1950

If this sort of price relationship persists to 1975, haivest- probably will be harvesting now-though there may be ing machinery too expensive in about a fourth more fruits and terms of today's labor costs may nuts than they do nowadays well become relatively cheap And while they won't need as tomorrow.

By 1975, three-fourths of the U.S. vegetable crop probably will be machine harvested That compares with a bit more than man, Drumore, last fall purchas- hour half today.

Practically all the Nation's and recently completed the transsnap bean crop, all the reas, action by purchasing all the re- hours to produce And it'll be carrots, and potatoes will be maining calves and heifers, notes just about the same story for plucked mechanically, along the Pennsylvania Golden Guern- other citrus crops, too with much of the tomato. let- sey News

In fact, only fresh tomato haivesting will be less than halfway mechanized by 1975

As for funts and nuts, the two per cent now being machine picked should be up to 17 As overall vegetable and fruit per cent in 1975 There'll be plete. And there should be big gains too in sweet cherites, wine grapes, and cling peaches.

> The machines' coming isn't however

zation will still be slight.

Brenemans Get Herd

Lany E and Connie E Breneed Paul Biyan's milking heid time consuming. Thus, total harvest work won't be as com-

down only about 19 per cent. With crop production slated to go up a fourth and output per man-hour to rise only about a fifth, the total amount of labor going into fruits and nuts in 1975 will probably be close to what it is today.

Harvesting may take eight million compared with 249 million today However, total labor for all fruits and nuts, includ-The reason: A big gain in ing all preharvest work, could drop only three per cent by 1975-from 418 million to 414

Only cherries and grapes will Faimeis five years hence need a lot less labor then than some slight cutbacks in stiawbernes and pecans, too

But citrus crops will call for more work in the years ahead Output of oranges, for example, is slated to fise 41 per cent But there'll be only a moderate improvement in output per man-

Thus, tomorrow's larger crop will take 24 per cent more man-Vegetables, in contrast, will

Spurred by sharply rising la-tuce, cucumber, and onion much harvest labor - be easier to harvest In the machines will have cut their next five years, mechanization holders will most likely be jolineeds about 23 per cent per will have cut the amount of ed by the unequal changes in acre - some prehavest chores harvest labor per acre almost fuut and vegetable labor icwill still be hand done and in half And even though pre-quirements

today.

vegetables over the next couple more help, even with more maof years, man hours for harvest chine power. will fall off 40 per cent-from hours, about a 27 per cent de clíne.

Unskilled and migrant job

Some workers — those who labor going into an acre of pletely mechanized, total labor work on snap beans, for exfruits and vegetables will be going into an acre of vegetables ample - are going to find will be about a third less than themselves out of jobs as the pace of mechanization picks up With an expected 11 per cent in the next five years Citiu, increase in the production of producers, though, will need

> Eventually, however, adop-163 million to 98 million. And tion of the new technology 15 total labor needs will go from going to mean a smaller, more 265 million hours to 194 million stable, better paid, and more highly skilled work force in fruit and vegetable production.



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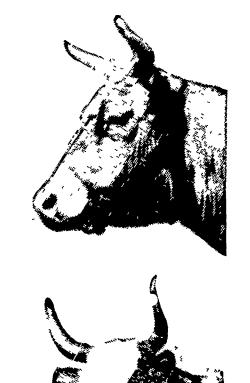
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