

Can the world afford to feed itself

TUCSON, ARIZ. — Our most pressing problem in the 1980s will be getting food to the world's needy people at a price that won't cause political unrest and violence, agricultural consultant Glen Allen said here recently.

Discounting predictions of world famines and food shortages, Allen, who has traveled to over 115 countries, said, "The question is not, can the world feed itself, but, can the world pay for food production and distribution?"

Speaking to the annual meeting of Livestock Marketing Association, Allen pointed out that only seven countries currently produce more food than they eat, and these nations represent 12 percent of the world's population.

"In other words, 88 percent of the people of the world depend on the other 12 percent in the food sphere to supply most or part of their food. This is an opportunity for marketing and distribution."

Allen defined the food sphere as all inputs and

services required for the production of food stuffs, and ending with the consumption of the raw or processed products.

Raising the necessary money to market and distribute food, training local managers and organizing local projects raises very, very difficult questions, and there are no easy answers, he said.

Allen also said the question of redistribution of income and wealth is an extremely controversial area, and it could probably be the biggest event of the decade. He said many of the events of the 1980s will have this issue as the root of the problem.

Saying he didn't expect a world recession in the next decade, Allen also noted that, if there was one, it could bring about a redistribution of income where the rich get poorer, the poor get poorer.

Another big question during the 1980s is "whether the philosophy of growth will remain intact. I think we may come to accept much

more of the limited or controlled growth philosophy." Allen said technological advances and computer analyses "will help us look at an option" involving controlled growth, "rather than growth for just growth's sake alone."

On the domestic front, Allen said the "key issues as we enter the decade are energy, inflation and food." Worker productivity and wages will be another major issue, he said, adding "Workers are getting behind, with 12.5 inflation and 7 to 10 percent wage hikes."

Concerning energy, Allen said, "We will probably be looking at \$1.80 per gallon gasoline by the end of this year. That seems to be about the price that I would equate with the price of gasoline in most of the markets of the world when you adjust how they handle gasoline taxes."

Allen also offered some "technological forecasts" for the 1980s:

Genetic engineering — "I don't know how fast it's going to happen, but it's certainly been seen a great deal in the plant world; we've seen a bit of it in the animal world, and I think

we're going to see a lot more of it."

Preventive medicine through nutrition — "You're going to have to eat food tailored to your needs. We're now in a position where we can look at an individual's (nutrition) needs a little bit better. Therefore, we'll be getting into some foods which will be engineered to be low in calories and fats, and so forth, for some individuals."

Meat will not be replaced by texturized vegetable protein — "I don't see that, I don't see the single cell doing that, and I don't see a pill

replacing food in the current decade."

Development of joint ventures between farmers, industry and government agencies — "This is not a new concept. It was kicked off in the middle of the 1960s. We may not like it in its first form, but once one examines what the three parties are agreeing to, it's possible that it might work."

Allen spoke to the annual meeting of LMA, a Kansas City-based trade organization representing the marketing sector of the livestock industry

Legislative roundup

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used as a basis for his testimony a Penn State report entitled "Alternatives to the Property Tax for Financing Pennsylvania Public Schools"

The report, partially funded by PFA, was prepared by Theodore R. Alter, a professor with the Penn State Department of Agricultural Economics and rural sociology.

Mobilia told the four commission members at the meeting that the average farmer pays 6.94-percent of his taxable income into the school system, while the average non-farmer pays only 2.97-percent of his taxable income.

And while Mobilia pointed out that the property tax levied an uneven burden, it had some good points. It is a stable taxing device, it is under local control and people understand it.

He said he recognized the difficulty inherent in trying to devise a state-wide taxing philosophy that would apply

equally to all school districts in Pennsylvania.

According to Robert Strauss, a Carnegie-Mellon University sociologist who heads up the commission's research activities, the hearing was well-attended, especially in the morning.

He said the commission was formed in October by newly-elected Governor Dick Thornburgh to look into ways to make the state's taxing policies more equitable without any sacrifice in treasury revenues.

Wednesday's hearing, in addition to testimony from farmers, also heard from Erie area industrialists who talked about the impact state taxes have on economic development and job creation in the state.

The group meets again in Scranton later this month to discuss the taxation of energy and banks.

In Washington, Congress is set to repeal the controversial carry-over basis provision for the taxation of

inherited property, according to a spokesman for Rep. Allen E. Ertel's office.

Ertel is one of a number of Pennsylvania Congressmen working to repeal the 1976 law which changed the method by which estates are valued. Prior to 1976, an estate was appraised at the time it passed into the hands of the deceased's beneficiaries.

If the beneficiary then elected to sell the estate, his capital gains tax was computed on the increase in value from the time he inherited the property.

However, the IRS in 1976 managed to get the lawmakers to approve a law which said the estate's value should be computed on the value of the property at the time it was acquired by the deceased.

Needless to say, it would have been difficult to determine original property values of farms that have been passed down from generation to generation. The law was so unpopular that it has never been im-

plemented, and is now on the verge of repeal.

Farmers' social security payments were another item for discussion in Washington over the past few weeks, according to Ertel's office.

According to present social security policy, a farmer who retires, for example, in the fall after his crop is harvested, can collect social security benefits right away. And if he never sells the corn he's harvested, he can continue receiving benefits without a hitch.

If he does sell the corn, however, his benefits are reduced, maybe even wiped out if he gets a good enough price.

According to the Ertel spokesman, the policy was seen as unfair, because the farmer was being paid for work done before he retired.

It also unfairly hits some other people with delayed compensations, such as life insurance agents, accountants and attorneys. — DW

Farm Calendar

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Garden Spot Young Farmers Manure Management meeting, 7-30 p.m., Union Grove School

Animal Health Information Day sponsored by Animal Medic, Inc., 8 a.m., Lancaster Co Farm and Home Center

Dauphin Co Farm Financial Management meeting, 10 a.m., Extension Office

Cumberland Co Dairy Herd Reproductive School, 9.15 a.m., Embers Restaurant, Carlisle, continues thru the 6th

Wednesday, February 6
Montgomery Co. Family Estate Planning meeting, 10 a.m., Holiday Inn, Kulpville

DHIA Reports meeting for feedmen, 1 p.m., Lancaster Co Farm and Home Center

Hunterdon Co Board of Agriculture meeting, 8 p.m., Extension Center

Pennsylvania Young Farmers Assoc. Convention, continues thru the 7th, Sheraton Inn, Gettysburg

Thursday, February 7
Lebanon Co. Extension Bus Trip to Philadelphia Fabric District

French Creek meeting sponsored by Grange, 8 p.m., East Vincent Twp Building.

Lancaster Co 4-H Beef & Sheep Banquet, 6-30 p.m., Farm and Home Center

Friday, February 8
Lancaster Co Swine Assoc. Banquet, 6-30 p.m., Harvest Drive Restaurant

Penna Egg Marketing Assoc meeting, 7 p.m., Sheraton Conestoga Village, Lancaster

Saturday, February 9
Delaware Holstein Assoc. annual meeting, Bridgeville.

Now Is The Time

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exist. This manure cover will not only protect the roots from cold weather but will supply some nitrogen and other fertilizer elements. When applied on the ground when it is frozen, there will be little damage to the wheat plants

This practice should not be applied on fields sloping toward public streams.

Since fertilizer costs are headed upward this spring, this manure application could take the place of commercial fertilizer being applied in March

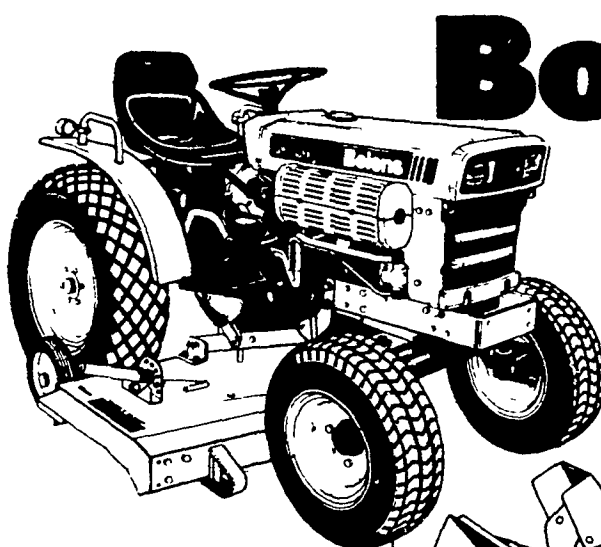
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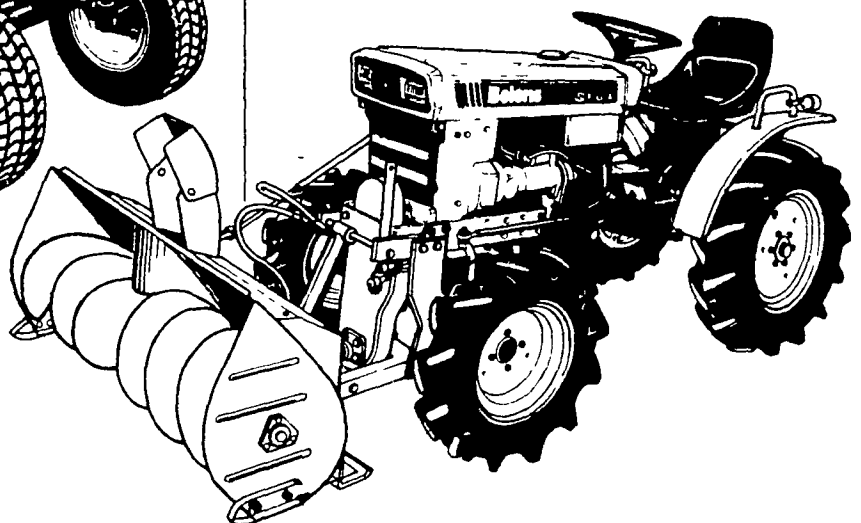
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