

Food shortage problems will continue

UNIVERSITY PARK — Population growing faster than food production — now occurring in Africa and South Asia — is the most difficult food problem worldwide, in the opinion of a Penn State economist working to improve international agriculture.

Wayne A. Schutjer, College of Agriculture economist, said the worst gap between food production and food needs is centered in Africa and South Asia where food production per person declined between 1970 and 1980.

"Africa and South Asia are the continents where the largest population growth will continue," he affirmed. "The population of Africa, which stood at 401 million in 1975, is projected to reach 823 million by the next century.

"South Asia, with a current population of 1.2 billion, will surpass 4.1 billion within another hundred years. That many billions," he added, "about equals the population of the entire world back in 1975."

To back his observations,

Schutjer said food production in the less developed nations grew at a faster rate than in the developed nations from 1970 to 1980. Nonetheless, rapid population growth in the "have not" countries allowed almost no additional food per person. In the developed nations, food production per person increased by 8 percent from 1970 to 1980.

The population versus food situation is further complicated by periodic famine among low income groups throughout the globe, closely related to chronic hunger among 750 million people.

For 20 years, Schutjer has conducted studies of international agricultural development. During an 18 month leave-of-absence, he served as the Southeast Asia Program Advisor for the Ford Foundation. Earlier he directed the Research and Training Network of the Agricultural Development Council, a private foundation in New York City. Prior to this he was in the Policy Planning Division of the Agency for

International Development, U.S. Department of State.

The Penn State economist said programs and policies are available for the U.S. and other nations to assist "have not" countries in meeting their food needs. Ultimately, however, solutions must be found in the food-deficit nations themselves, he affirmed.

For "have not" nations to provide adequate food, birth control must be used widely and other social and economic changes

must be introduced into agriculture, Schutjer declared.

"It's an old story but one that bears repeating," he said. "Social and economic changes that redistribute income downward provide income to buy food. And farmers need access to land and capital to increase food production — both lacking in many less developed nations."

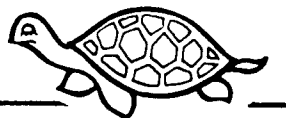
He indicated the transformation from "have not" to "have" will be difficult, expensive, time-consuming, and not without

political turmoil and violence in many countries.

"To redistribute assets and create institutions to benefit the poor and those not well served goes against the existing patterns of wealth and power," he noted.

He concluded that the U.S. can serve a major role in developing agricultural technology for use in the less developed countries. But he said it is not likely that the "have not" nations will welcome foreign assistance in changing the distribution of wealth and power.

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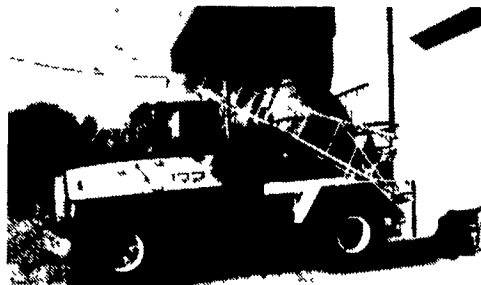
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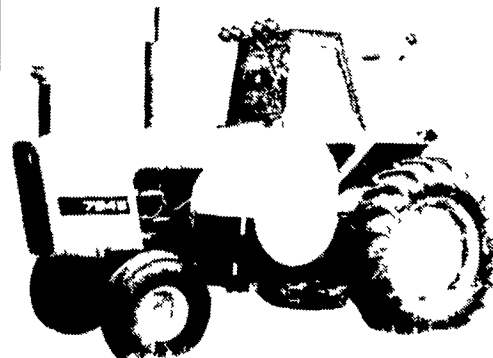


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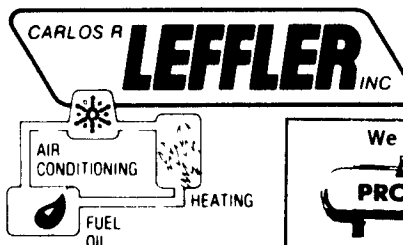
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