

Expert says famine can be halted in Africa

ITHACA, NY - Famine in Africa can be eliminated through a coordinated scientific, political, and economic effort, according to the man who is credited as the "father of the Green Revolution."

Nobel Laureate Norman E. Borlaug, an Andrew Dickson White Professor-at-Large at Cornell University, says the African famine is far from hopeless, because similar food shortages in Mexico, Pakistan, and India were solved when those countries adopted sound farming methods and instituted economic reforms that allowed the farmers to succeed.

Borlaug says that Ethiopia and other countries someday could be growing enough food to feed their people if they follow the examples of countries such as Mexico.

Borlaug, 71, won the Nobel Prize

for Peace in 1970 for his work on improving agricultural output in Mexico, India, and Pakistan. His successes in India and Pakistan were called the "Green Revolution" by the popular press.

Borlaug believes that his "Green Revolution" can succeed in starving African nations, if these countries are willing to mount a concerted effort.

The world renowned scientist made the point in a public lecture on "Agricultural Research and the African Food Crisis" during his recent visit to Cornell.

When I got to Mexico in 1944, I witnessed a situation not unlike what is facing Africa today," Borlaug told his audience.

Borlaug first traveled to Mexico as a plant scientist working for the cooperative Mexican agricultural program, which was a joint effort

of the Mexican government and the Rockefeller Foundation. His job was to develop Mexico's wheat production to its full potential and to train Mexican farmers and scientists.

Eventually, Borlaug developed high-yield, disease-resistant varieties for Mexican farmers. When the Mexican agricultural program began, Mexico's wheat production averaged only 11 bushels per acre; today, it is 70 bushels, Borlaug pointed out.

Although the technology of disease-resistant crops brought successes in Mexico's fields, that country's agricultural development would have been impossible without accompanied economic reforms. Those reforms, such as credits to farmers who needed to buy seed and fertilizer, were as

important as the technology itself, Borlaug said.

You can have all the technology in the world, but nothing will happen unless it is tied in with an economic policy that would back the technology," Borlaug emphasized.

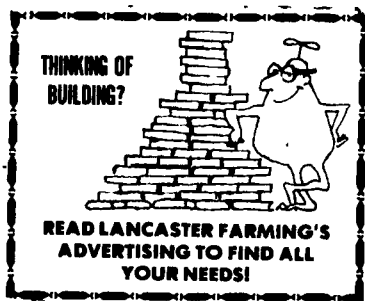
In many developing nations, Borlaug said, the economic climate is working against farmers. For example, farmers in many developing nations are expected to increase their crop yields, yet they are being paid about half the going world market rate for their grains.

That situation exists because governments in those countries suppress agricultural prices to appease the minority of their people who live in urban areas, Borlaug said.

If these countries do not begin

boosting their agricultural production, famines will worsen, as the populations exceed the food production capacity," he predicted.

Currently affiliated with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in Mexico, Borlaug is a consultant for the Rockefeller Foundation, in addition to his Cornell professorship.



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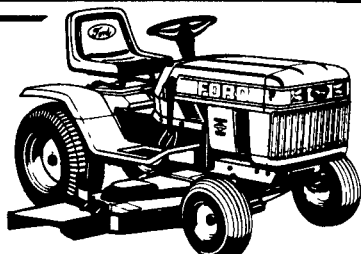
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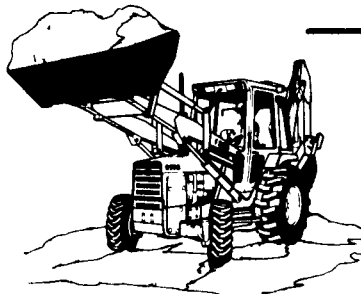
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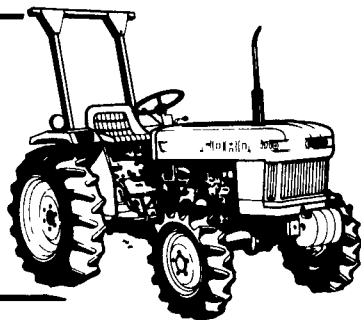


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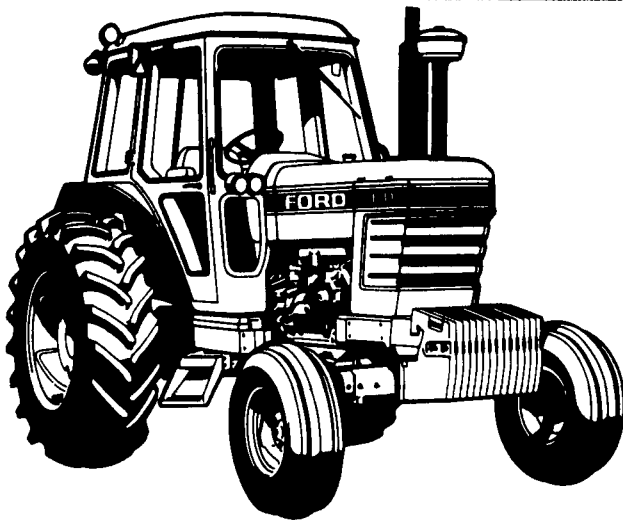
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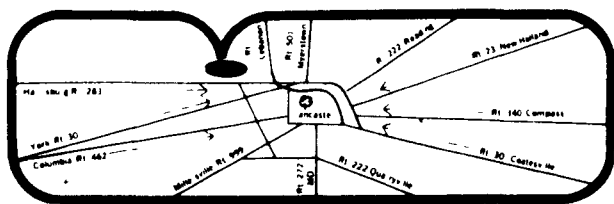
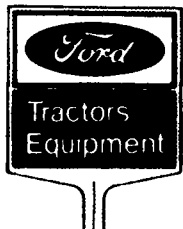
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