

AGRICULTURE

# Thanksgiving for All

The food situation has improved all over the world. In America the harvest is the most bountiful since the Pilgrim Fathers landed.

By N. E. DODD

Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

An Oregon stock and grain farmer, Mr. Dodd came to his present position after serving as Undersecretary of Agriculture. In this article he describes how the scientific agriculture which keeps America well fed is being used to help peoples throughout the world solve their own food problems—and raise their own Thanksgiving feasts.

► NEVER in all the three centuries since the Pilgrim Fathers kept that first Thanksgiving Day on American soil has the annual harvest festival concluded such a fruitful season as that now coming to a close.

While we in the United States rejoice that we have enough and to spare, the rest of the world joins us. For, although harvests elsewhere are more bountiful than they have been in recent years, the world still needs the mighty production of America to help feed the hungry millions.

In fact, the world will always need to draw upon this continent for our extra production—production that arises not only from a fruitful soil, but from the application to agriculture of advanced scientific technology.

It is, I think, cause for thanksgiving even greater than the bountiful harvest that the nations of the world have joined to share their knowledge of production and distribution in common action through FAO. In this fact lies the seed of more bountiful future harvests everywhere, with a gradual rise in the health and well-being of all mankind.

## Renewed Mankind's Hopes

This year of generally good crops has unquestionably renewed mankind's hopes for the future, and so has relieved at least some of the fears and tensions which have made the world so uneasy since the war. Like the Pilgrim Fathers of Plymouth Colony with their good crops after that first bleak winter, the world has strength and hope to rebuild, to plan anew for peace and prosperity.

This year's 3,500,000,000-bushel corn crop will be the largest in United States history. Wheat will be only some six percent below the 1,365,000,000 bushel record crop of 1947, and 36% above the 1937-46 average. The oats crop is the third largest in the country's history. Grain sorghum production will be 28% and soybean production 53% above 1937-46 averages.

During the last two years (1946-47 and 1947-48) the United States exported about one-half of the bread grains that went into

the world market and this comprised about a third of the total production of bread grains in the United States.

In spite of great effort and substantial progress, European production still falls short of normal requirements, with net production of food some 26% below prewar. Only Sweden, Switzerland and Britain have succeeded since the war in bringing their volume of food production above the prewar levels. Not only the destruction and disorganization of the war, but unfavorable weather in the two seasons preceding 1948 have contributed to the shortfall of European production.

In the Far East, the 1948 harvests are above those of 1947 but still below prewar production except in Siam, the Philippines, India and Pakistan, where they only slightly exceed prewar averages. But the Far East as a whole is not meeting its own needs. Before the war, the region was a net exporter of important staple foodstuffs; since the war it has been a net importer, thus placing additional demands upon traditional exporting countries.

## Food Situation Improved

Elsewhere in the world—in the Near East and on the African continent, in the Soviet Union, Oceania and Latin America—the food situation is definitely improved over that of the previous year and in most places over the prewar years.

But even such good harvest and the progress made so far is not good enough. Even before the war, millions of people were not adequately fed. In the last ten years, population has grown by 200 million—roughly the equivalent of the North American continent's population. Every morning there are 55,000 more people for breakfast than there were the morning before, and production does not yet match this rate of rise in population.

This is why there is great cause for thanksgiving that the peoples of the world are showing such willingness to work together to increase production and improve distribution of the products of the soil and the waters.

For the last ten days, the Conference of FAO has been holding its Fourth Annual Session in Washington. This world food parliament of 57 nations—the largest international gathering ever held in Washington—is reviewing the state of food and agriculture in the world. It is studying the programs of the member nations in their efforts to improve the situation, and endeavoring to integrate these programs better. It is reviewing the progress made to

date and the needs which remain. It is planning further action, both national and international, through FAO.

These plans of work include such broad intergovernmental action as continuing the system of international allocation of scarce foodstuffs until total supplies are more adequate. They include, likewise, such fundamental workaday jobs as spreading the use of hybrid corn seed, immunizing cattle against rinderpest, and ratproofing and fumigating grain storage. In all of these, national action has been aided by FAO.

## Hybrid Seed Corn

North American hybrid seed corn has been introduced into Europe and schools held on corn breeding. If the 20% increase in production attributed to hybrid corn in North America can be achieved in Europe, the increase in production there would equal a third of that continent's needs of imported coarse grains to rebuild its livestock production.

In China alone, a million cows and buffaloes a year are killed by rinderpest. These animals not only produce milk and meat, but draw rice farmers' plows. Mass production of avianized vaccine in China will make it possible to immunize 15 million animals south of the Yangtze river in a project now under way.



**TWO FARMERS TALK CORN—** Director-General Norris E. Dodd of FAO examines a sample of the world's hugest corn crop on the farm of J. J. Hutton, near Brookville, Md.



**PRIMITIVE FARMING**—This Korean farmer is his own beast of burden. Such inefficient farming methods need to give way to more modern ones, in order to abate the world's hunger.

The toll of stored bread grains and rice taken by rats, insects and fungi has been estimated as equalling the amount of world trade in grains. Saving even a small percentage of the present loss would help to close the gap between the grain available

and the grain needed to feed the world better.

The harvest of scientific research, like the harvest of the earth itself, is being put to work for the universal well-being of mankind.

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948

#### ARCHAEOLOGY

## Ruins of Pagan Temple

► **COLOGNE CATHEDRAL**, Germany's most magnificent place of Christian worship, stands on a site devoted in pre-Christian times to the service of the pagan gods and goddesses of Rome. A discovery made during the war, when a bombproof shelter was being dug near the cathedral, appears to be the remains of a structure dedicated to Dionysos, the ancient Greco-Roman wine-god. Details of the find are given by Dr. Ernstwilhelm Gerster, of the Roman-German Museum of Cologne, in the scientific journal, *FORSCHUNGEN UND FORTSCHRITTE* (April).

When the diggers of the bomb shelter first found the buried ruins, they were thought to be the remains of a palace—possibly the Roman governor's dwelling. The building had been large, with over-all dimensions of approximately 270 by 330 feet. There were many rooms, but the center of interest proved to be a hall about 23 by 33 feet, apparently used for feasting.

This room had an elaborate mosaic floor, with six large pictorial panels and many smaller designs. The smaller mosaics depict good things to eat: fat ducks, peacocks, turtles, oysters, baskets of fruit. One of the larger pictures is of Cupid riding on a lion. The other five depict a satyr and a maenad—male and female followers of Dionysos—in successive stages of the wild ecstatic dance that featured the worship of the god.

It is known that Dionysos-worship involved festivities of a kind that early Christians regarded simply as orgies, so that decorations that might seem more appropriate to a Roman night club would not be at all out of place in the wine-god's house. And since grape-culture and wine-making were brought to the Rhine valley by the Romans, a great temple to Dionysos would be definitely appropriate in the city they built on the river.

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948

*"There are no problem children, only problem environments and parents."*

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