

The World Grain Situation

July 22 (IPS)—The UN predicts starvation of 20 million this year in India. This murder is due to the policies carried out by the oil cartels, the World Bank, and U.S. Agency for International Development (AID)—the CIA conduit in the State Department. Because India has over \$1 billion in inflated oil debts, the World Bank and AID refused additional loans to guarantee purchase of fertilizer and pesticides. In consequence, India's harvest is one-third short of its projected needs and has no "capital" to purchase emergency grains on the world market. India's wheat crop is expected to reach only 22.6 million tons, down from last year's 24.5 million tons because of a year of drought and poor harvest.

Pakistan's wheat harvest is expected to recover to 8.4 million tons, up over last year's 7.3 million tons. Australia's wheat crop will be a bumper harvest this year between 10-13 million tons.

The world picture for corn is equally positive, with an increase of nine per cent to 272 million tons expected, not counting the U.S.S.R. and Red China. South Africa and Argentina both set record corn harvests.

World wheat production is expected to show an even larger increase of ten per cent to 365 million tons, again not including the Soviets and Red China. The wheat harvest in the EEC is expected to be near last year's 41 million tons. Germany and Italy expect expansion of their wheat harvests to total 1.5 million tons. France will have .7 million decrease, although farmers who made a large profit from last year's market, probably increased the area under planting.

In the U.S.S.R., mild weather and adequate rainfall in the most fertile soil region of European Russia guarantee a bumper crop for this important grain area.

Livestock Slaughter Expected

In the U.S.A., Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz cautioned at a news conference that one should not be heartened by the record grain harvest this summer. His argument runs in circles, trying to coverup for the facts of rising consumer prices while farmers have suffered a 18.7 per cent plunge in farm rices. Butz claimed that the harvest will be less than originally expected due to poor weather and will thus fuel inflation.

With grain prices soaring, livestock farmers will be forced to dump their animals for whatever price the market offers, especially in the Fall. This renewed wave of slaughter, so that farmers will not have to hold their animals over the winter when they will be dependent on costly feed grains, will be the last straw. Prices will plunge even further; more livestock farmers will go bankrupt; and soon, the enraged slaughter of young animals—too expensive to raise and feed—will spring up in this country as it is spreading now in Europe.

Despite record grain harvests which provide animal feeds for intensive livestock farming as well as direct human consumption, the number of cattle and calves on feed has declined 21 per cent from 1973. Grass-fed animals are being shipped directly from grazing land to the meatpackers. In Texas and Kansas, this practice, resulting in less weight per head and therefore less income per head, has increased to 24 per cent and 33 per cent respectively above last year.

Furthermore, the dry weather in the western grain producing states, including Texas and Kansas, and in the north threatens to tumble the corn, soybean and wheat harvests.