

production engineers in the field give a ratio of one tractor and accessories for each two-and-one-half autos of present capacity. Conversion of the idle five million per annum rate of auto capacity, therefore, will yield capacity for two million tractors.

At present costs of production, the two million tractors to be produced through initial conversion will cost \$40 billion. Congress will therefore make reappropriations, on a quarterly basis, from such sources as the Defense Department or the non-working-class tax base, of \$10 billion for the credit of the Department of Agriculture to defray current production costs of tractors.

These initial Phase One measures, by saving the spring planting, and getting the U.S. workers back on the job, will immediately lay the basis for turning around the widespread famine situations that prevail throughout the so-called developing countries, areas which have been earmarked by the Rockefeller brothers as bases for the genocidal policies of triage, as in the plague-ravaged Indian subcontinent. Congress must be forced to act now while we can still get the crops into the ground for the spring.

HOW TO BUILD FIVE MILLION TRACTORS A YEAR

Jan. 11 (IPS)--The National Caucus of Labor Committees Research and Development section has estimated, on the basis of information supplied by several engineers inside and outside the tractor industry itself, that the current rate of U.S. tractor production can be increased 20 times over--from 250,000 to five million units per year--within three to six months after auto plants begin to be converted to tractor production.

Tractor production can be immediately tripled without auto plant conversion, merely by using existing tractor production facilities to full capacity, the engineers said. By using existing unconverted auto-parts production facilities to "feed into" tractor production instead of auto production, tractor production can be increased by another 33 per cent.

Full conversion of auto plants themselves will take from three to six months, according to engineers who based their estimates on the length of time required to convert auto to tank production during World War II. Based on a capacity of 10 million autos produced in 1973, Labor Committee researchers estimate that conversion will produce some four million tractors per year.

Tools for the Working Class

Engineers from tractor companies and university agricultural engineering departments supplied this information to persons working

with the Fusion Energy Foundation and the Labor Committees as soon as they were shown the real dimensions of the ecological crisis and the basic competence of the working-class solution. Although almost all of them had been previously bludgeoned by Rockefeller propaganda into accepting one version or another of a "finite resources" world view, their social identity is clearly tied up with expanding production.

For example, in the majority of the discussions they asked such questions as "How do you expect to get around the ideology and backwardness of Third World populations?" When they were told that large numbers of such workers and their families were necessary labor power who will be imported to the advanced sector to become more rapidly educated and assimilated into an industrial society, the engineers did not object; they just gulped.

In one instance, an engineer whose solution to humanity's predicament was "back to the small farm" was briefed on the feasibility of fusion power production; he immediately understood that he was no longer condemned to a world of band-aid solutions to impossible problems and started talking. Another engineer, who responded to a fusion power briefing by sneering "What do you want to do, build an atomic tractor?", began discussing tractor production seriously when he was told "Well, we might want to consider hydrogen tractors like those used in North Africa during World War II."

One of the few tractor experts who questioned the rapid feasibility of auto-tractor conversion was Fred Lamp, director of marketing for the Ford Tractor Division. "The U.S. and Europe are already up to full agricultural production, and Ford is producing all the tractors we can," he claimed. "It would take a year and a half to two years to convert auto engine production to tractor engine production."

To prove it, Lamp called in an expert on "timing," who promptly told him a new tractor assembly plant could be built from the ground up in only 14 months. He added that existing engine production could be doubled just by adding a second shift to the workforce.

Isolating the Bottlenecks

In discussions like these, Labor Committee Research and Development also began to isolate the real bottlenecks in the conversion process and to find solutions. The possible problem with engines, for instance, should be solved by the military, which is planning to increase tank engine production. All that is required is that the working class demand this production capacity be used for tractors instead.

Another problem is directly caused by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which has collaborated with U.S. Steel to shut

down plants in Gary, Ind. supposedly for violating pollution standards. According to one engineer, this has put grey iron casting required for tractor production six months behind schedule. Workers must also organize to stop this sabotage.

An essential problem arises from the different requirements of auto and tractor production. Autos use light-weight engines, a light-pressed frame, and an intricately-pressed body. Tractors require cast iron and heavier sheets of steel; the additional weight is necessary for increased traction and durability. Because the equipment in auto assembly plants cannot handle the heavier tractor components, auto assembly plant production lines will probably have to be totally rebuilt.

Additionally, some portion of the steel industry will have to be converted, in what initial reports indicate is a relatively minor operation, to the production of the heavier metal. Unconverted light-duty steel production facilities can be used to produce agricultural implements; for example, plastic trim plants can be converted to produce plastic tubing for agricultural irrigation.

Other important "shortages" which must be remedied are those of heavy-duty tires and of bearings.

These initial estimates are predicated on current basic tractor design. Tractor quality can be improved according to such specifications simply and immediately by upgrading the quality of the materials and engineering that goes into production.

How far and how soon fundamental innovations in the production process are made depends on such factors as delay in production time and the availability of the capital requirements. For example, an alternative gear manufacturing process is already available which would vastly increase tractor durability, but its large capital cost and the additional retooling time may render it unsuitable right now.

As soon as the Research and Development unit in New York City gets a more detailed picture of tractor production requirements, it will be circulated in the working class--so that workers can help to "marry" them with existing auto plant design.

USDA COVERS UP AGRICULTURAL DISASTER IN LAKE STATES

NEW YORK, N.Y., Jan. 11 (IPS)--After serving as the bankers' hatchetman in eliminating the bulk of low-interest loans, disaster assistance, and other farm production support programs, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has launched one of the most criminal coverup operations in history.