

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.

At the point that dairy farming across the country is going under, the U.S. Department of Agriculture proclaims in a one-page review of 1974 Financial Conditions and Outlook for 1975 for the Lake States in their December "Agricultural Finance Outlook": "Prospects for farm income are better for 1975." "Dairy enterprises are the most important in the region, providing about one-fourth of agricultural income," they continue and "dairy producers' net incomes should be up a bit with receipts rising more than costs."

As for 1974 the USDA comments: "Cash grain farmers were in good financial condition, except for some weather stricken areas. ...incomes of dairy producers were hurt in the summer by the sharp drop in milk prices but prices began to improve in the third quarter."

The Lake States--Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan--are major producers of dairy products and among the top ten in grain production.

The Real Story

The real story is otherwise. First-hand descriptions of the farming situation in Minnesota from authoritative sources who live and work in agriculture there give a good indication of the crisis at hand.

*For years Minnesota's dairy unit numbers have been stable at about 118,000. Minnesota is the nation's major source of manufactured dairy products. Between June 30, 1973 and June 30, 1974, by official census, 3,188 of those operations were lost. The State Agricultural Commissioner's office anticipates that the January census count will show a drastic absolute decline in dairy operations for the first time in 35 years.

Witnesses describe the reality behind those figures as a "totally unprecedented phenomenon--the state is covered with auction posters!"

*As of Dec. 1, the volume of crop loss in Minnesota was "re-evaluated" to show that losses were double what had been assumed. Farmers lost \$1.5 billion in field crops alone! In August it had been estimated that 160 million bushels of corn had been lost; by December corn losses were "readjusted" to 190 million bushels, or \$545 million at mid-November prices.

*At the same time, emergency disaster assistance--the singular means by which grain farmers would recoup their losses enough to be able to continue with this year's planting--is non-existent.

*Sources in the State Agriculture Department report a large and rising volume daily of frantic calls, pleas, and appeals from absolutely desperate farmers who can get no credit.

These same sources asserted that it was impossible to make any firm prediction on the spring planting and equated such predictions with a gambling game. "We won't know until we get there," one source concluded. "Unless something is done we will see a wholesale exodus of farmers from the land."

So much for the USDA's deadly game of blind-man's bluff.

FERTILIZER SABOTAGE THREATENS SPRING PLANTING

NEW YORK, N.Y., Jan. 12 (IPS)--The natural gas hoax currently orchestrated by the Federal Power Commission immediately threatens the supply of fertilizer upon which the next crop depends. Natural gas is the key feedstock in the production of nitrogen fertilizer.

Calling for emergency mandatory conservation measures, as a direct result of the deliberate three per cent reduction in natural gas production in 1974, the FPC is unilaterally cutting natural gas supplies to industrial users--especially fertilizer producers.

At the U.S. Steel's Agri-Chemicals plant in Cherokee, Ala., production of nitrogen fertilizer has been cut by 70 per cent, according to recent reports in the agribusiness weekly Feedstuffs. The cut stems from an FPC ruling which issued a final order cutting the plant's supply of natural gas.

According to spokesmen for Agri-Chemicals, the potential loss in grain production is more than 500,000 bushels of corn for each day the curtailment continues.

CIA ADMINISTRATION LEADS WORLD FOOD COUNCIL

Jan. 11 (IPS)--CIA agent John A. Hannah has been chosen acting chief of staff for the World Food Council. The Council was set up by the Rockefellers at the UN World Food Conference in Rome last November to create mechanisms for world food control.

Hannah's qualifications for the post include a stint as head of the Agency for International Development (AID), the 1960s CIA operation in Latin America responsible for establishing the political and social infrastructure required for the Rockefellers to carry out advanced looting of the Latin American working class in the 1970s.

His new job will be to establish a similar international operation enabling the Rockefellers to use food as a weapon of class war--starving out those sectors of the working class who refuse to comply with the Rockefellers' orders.