

Agriculture by Marcia Merry

The media cover-up

Finally they're reporting that farmers are going bankrupt—but lying that the cause is too much food!

Television "specials" and 18 pages of cover-story copy in *Newsweek* and *Time* in February are finally getting around to telling you there is a national farm crisis. What they are not telling you is that there is a national food-supply crisis.

The propaganda painting on the cover of *Time* on Feb. 18 showed a farmer "up to his neck" in "surplus grain." *Newsweek* ran a contrived picture of harvest-time wheat overflowing at storage elevators captioned, "A mountain of grain in Washington state."

Leaving aside such gems as *Time's* mislabelling a photo of beef cattle as a dairy herd, the media is simply covering up the looming food shortages.

Over one year ago, in December 1983, *EIR* featured excerpts from a special policy report by then presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, *The World Food Crisis of 1985*, released on Nov. 13, 1983.

LaRouche wrote: "In the United States itself, approximately 100,000 high-technology, family-operated farms produce about three-quarters of the essential food output of the nation; these farmers have been driven into bankruptcy at increasing rates since President Jimmy Carter and his Federal Reserve chairman Paul A. Volcker introduced policies which Volcker himself named 'controlled disintegration of the economy.' . . . If present policies continue through the time for the 1984 winter wheat planting, the United States will become a food-production deficit nation before the autumn harvest of 1985. It's just that

simple."

Now, even official Department of Agriculture figures, notoriously unreliable, show the acreage of 1984 winter wheat seeding down over 9%. Of the six states which produce over half of the annual U.S. wheat output, only in Texas and Missouri were farmers able to maintain planting levels. Winter wheat seeding in Illinois dropped fully 50%. In Missouri, planting dropped 30%. As LaRouche put it, "What you don't plant, you don't grow, and what you don't grow is not available to be eaten."

The food is simply not "out there," despite what you are told to believe. The meat supply is shrinking. The national cattle breeding herd is now at the lowest level since the early 1960s. The hog inventory is declining.

Your supermarket is full? Look again. There is more ham than ever from Denmark. Hog imports from Canada are at record levels. Your ground beef could be Mexican, Australian, or Canadian. Fresh produce is streaming in from Latin America. This flow is coordinated by a handful of cartel-companies—for example, Cargill's orange concentrate imports from Brazil, backed up by the International Monetary Fund's orders to nations to raise exports to pay debt.

Under this pressure to export cheaply and savagely reduce their own imports, the productive potential of the nations now supplying food to the United States is collapsing just as our own farm sector is being destroyed. The food coming in from outside will cease coming in. The interests behind the cartel companies aim for food

scarcities—under their strategic control. A top Cargill operative, Daniel Amstutz, now number-two man at the Department of Agriculture, speaks of eliminating family farmers and the economies-of-scale of the new serf-based custom livestock operations and factory farms Cargill is organizing. Amstutz told *Time* that "using modern mass-production techniques and breakthroughs promised by biogenetic research, the United States could soon grow enough grain and fiber to feed and clothe itself comfortably operating at just half its full crop-growing capacity. . . ."

This is a lethal delusion. If proper emergency measures are not taken to expand farm output, Americans can start tightening their belts literally. The middle-sized farms of our nation, those grossing \$40,000 to \$500,000, account for the bulk of the U.S. food supply as well as key world supplies of wheat, feedgrain, and rice. As much as 40% of these farms are about to go under—and the bulk of the U.S. food supply with them.

According to one study, done in part by a *Farm Journal* survey, fully 56 million of 373 million tilled acres are occupied by the most threatened one-third of farms, stuck with 65% of all farm debt, an average of \$325,000 per farm.

A just released survey by the American Bankers Association which spokesman Kenneth Lee called startling, reports that 13% of farmer borrowers will be unable to get credit anywhere to produce food this year. This contrasts with 3.4% last year, and 2.9% in 1982.

As LaRouche warned in November, 1983: "This means that there could be food rationing as early as 1985 or 1986. Don't delude yourself by saying to yourself that, 'They would never let it happen.' "