
The Flood of '93

FEMA won't rebuild levees in Midwest

Richard Krimm, deputy assistant director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), on Nov. 2 announced a new White House policy to close down hundreds of Midwest communities and not to rebuild levees, in the aftermath of the summer's disastrous floods. Krimm announced that the federal government will spend \$400 million—of which \$286 million is available, and the rest will have to be appropriated by the Congress—to relocate 10,000 buildings, mostly homes, out of the 90,000 buildings damaged in the Midwest by the flood. This is a big step toward undoing the standing, high-technology policy of building levees, river diversion channels, cutoffs, and other flood-control infrastructure to tame the Mississippi River system, and to build agriculture, industry, and commerce along its banks and on its waterway.

Under the program, according to the Nov. 3 *Chicago Tribune*, "local governments would pass ordinances preventing future development in the areas that are purchased in the buyout program." Instead, FEMA's Krimm stated, the areas would be turned into wetlands or parks.

FEMA is preying upon the desperate post-flood financial situation in which many communities find themselves. The leaders of one 700-person community, Grafton, Illinois, told *EIR* that they did not want to be relocated (see *EIR*, Oct. 1, 1993, "U.S. Emergency Mobilization Needed to Save Flood-Ravaged Midwest Towns"). But they were under severe budgetary constraints and had no means of their own to repair old levees or build new levees, to protect themselves. They proposed a plan to relocate their vital infrastructure to higher ground—sewer works, main roads, buildings—in order to keep their town intact otherwise. By the U.S. government shutting off the option of levee-building, and any other funding, Grafton, according to the *Chicago Tribune*, is now close to accepting blood money from FEMA to shut down most of its community forever. According to FEMA's Krimm, 53 entire towns and villages, and portions of 207 communities, will be "relocated"—in fact, shut down.

Policy change

A spokeswoman for FEMA told *EIR* that there is "a major policy change coming at FEMA and the rest of the government on flood policy." She stated that FEMA will now em-

brace "flood plain management," under which no infrastructure is built and the Mississippi River is allowed to flood wherever it pleases.

The damage from the flood is mounting throughout the food chain:

- There is a shortage of cattle fodder in Iowa, where hay production has fallen to the lowest level since 1949, according to Agri-News Service. The hay that survived the floods is low in nutrients. Farmers will be forced to pay more to feed their cattle through the winter, and many may dismantle breeding herds or place their cattle at risk of illness or death from malnourishment. Winter hay supplies will be very short.

Production of fodder is also off in Kansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Texas, and Georgia (because of drought), and in Wisconsin, a leading dairy state. Corn, the most important U.S. livestock feed, is being sold by dealers to livestock producers at relatively higher costs, even while cash-corn producers are getting less than \$2.40 a bushel—the lowest price in 20 years. The corn crop in Iowa will be 40% lower than last year (a record year) and at least 30% lower than average.

- Vomitoxin in Midwest corn is showing up more frequently in test samples—especially along the Iowa-Minnesota border, a wet region. The toxin is produced by molds that may thrive in wet weather. Corn samples are showing 0.5 to 5 parts per million. Pigs will eat corn with vomitoxin levels up to 3.5 ppm; dairy cattle will eat corn with levels up to 1.5 to 2 ppm. Beyond that level, the animals become ill.

- Bread-wheat supplies are severely short for the type of high-protein wheat used in the firm wheat loaf. The harvest of hard, high-protein wheat from the Dakotas is down. Canada's crops have been hit by early snowfalls, after weeks of wet weather. The Canadian Wheat Board says that the average protein content of top wheat grades has dropped from a normal 14.5% to barely 13%. Yet farm prices are not soaring. "Prime hard" wheat from Australia is only \$50 more a ton than last year.

Low prices to farmers

On top of all these calamities, the food cartel companies—with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's blessing—are still systematically underpaying U.S. farmers for grain output. The Big Lie in circulation to cover this up is shown in an Agri-News Service story on Oct. 21, titled "Lack of Market Response to Weather Due to National, International Events." Dated in Decorah, Iowa, it begins, "Despite severe crop losses in Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, and Wisconsin this year, events in this country and internationally have continued to hold down prices, says Robert Wisner, Iowa State University extension grain economist." What events are cited? Here's one example: "Former Soviet Union and East European animal numbers are down 16% to 20% from where they were five years ago, shrinking the potential demand base, Wisner said."