

Seed Shortages in U.S. Threaten Spring Planting

Jan. 9—Shortages of seed for U.S. Spring planting of corn and sorghum (milo) are a big concern now among farmers and state agriculture extension services in the Grain Belt. There are supplies of corn seeds in general, but there are only limited quantities of certain varieties-of-choice, instead of ample quantities of the full range of seeds, which should be available for the farmer to maximize output in his specific conditions. Farmers who can afford it, have rushed to line up orders in advance, hoping they will be fulfilled.

The majority of seed is supplied by a tight cartel of Monsanto, DuPont (Pioneer Hi-Bred brand), BayerCropScience, BASF, Syngenta, and very few others, whose monopolistic policies act in opposition to a policy of reserves and redundancy of supplies.

Lyndon LaRouche's PAC demands cancelling the laws allowing these practices, such as the WTO treaty; and getting Obama out of the Presidency, for presiding over this violation of national interest and other glaring unconstitutional acts.

The Jan. 5 *Wall Street Journal* coverage gloated, "Corn Seed Shortage Sows Farm Belt Woes," playing up the opportunity ahead for speculation on corn futures, with a graph of rising prices on the Chicago Board of Trade: "Kernels of a Rally." It put out the estimate that 2011 U.S. seed corn production was down 25-50% from 2010.

By day's end on Jan. 5, the Obama Administration and seed cartel supplier spokesmen had rushed

to deny any problems:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture Chief Economist Joseph Glauber told Reuters, "While some varieties may not be available, we have no evidence to suggest that planted acres will be constrained by a shortage of seed."

- Hugh Grant, CEO of Monsanto, the world's largest seed company, said on a conference call Jan. 5, in effect: Trust us, we will supply enough seed.

As for the big increase in farmers placing advance orders for seed, Grant put down any implication of worries over supply problems: "We don't see this as panic buying as much as a recognition of the yield increment that we are delivering and farmers rewarding us for that with early commitments." He slyly noted that some small, local U.S. seed companies will not be able to fulfill their customers' seed corn orders this year, and may go under, because they can't bring in seed from South America (as Monsanto can).

In fact, in Argentina, drought is threatening to lower the corn crop, including production of seed corn for U.S. use. Worldwide, corn supplies are jeopardized by crop problems in the United States and Argentina—the first and second biggest national sources for corn exports.

Any diminution of the corn crop has an intensified effect on the food supply, because close to 40% of the U.S. crop is now going for biofuel. In 2011, for the first time ever, the amount of U.S. corn harvest going to ethanol exceeded that going for livestock feed.

U.S. sorghum seeds are also short. For example, "For Milo Growers, New Year Brings Seed Shortage," was the headline on Jan. 1 in the news service www.agjournalonline.com.

—Marcia Merry Baker