

## IPS

pigs on the president's property. Similarly in Moribihan, hog breeders who were refused an audience by Agricultural Minister Bonnet released ten pigs onto the ministerial lawns. In Southwestern France, fruitgrowers, after threatening "to destroy all the Spanish peaches they find," blocked a highway in Vaucluse county causing a 40-mile long traffic jam. Fruitgrowers are claiming that the government has "stabbed them in the back" by acceding to the EEC Commission's negotiation of preferential agreements with Mediterranean countries. Winegrowers, fearful that they will have no place to store their next harvest because the last one is still filling their storage facilities, have issued an ultimatum to the French government backed by the threat of "different forms of action."

### **PCI Throws Small Farmers To the Fascists**

The disastrous implications of the Communist and Socialist parties' penchant for disciplined tailing of any local movement is most dramatically revealed in Italy.

Last week unionized farm laborers, or *braccianti*, currently on strike over the renewal of their national contract, staged a demonstration numbering 600,000 in Rome to protest the 12 per cent pay raise offered by the farmer associations — a demonstration which had the support of the metalworkers (FLM) and other trade unionists. Anxious to prove their support for the *braccianti*, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) daily *Unita* published an editorial blast against the giant farmers associations, a blast necessarily aimed at the small peasant landholders as well. Lacking any coherent notion of what to do in the crisis the PCI finds itself advocating warfare on the part of farm laborers against small peasant landowners, whom it otherwise tails

assiduously.

When the PCI is not actively aiding the small peasant's consolidation as a fascist force — as in their hysterical mimicking of livestock breeders' demands for import restrictions at the Verona Agricultural Fair in mid-March — they are forcing the peasantry into the arms of the fascists by pitting the farm laborers against them.

### **A North American Dust Bowl**

The political problems and potential of massive farmer revolt will soon face the North American working class movement as well. Right now U.S. agriculture hangs on the verge of depression-style collapse that will strangle food production and transform entire farm areas into "dust bowl" wastelands.

With a projected \$12 billion increase in farm debt during 1974 — primarily short-term — interest payments alone will amount to \$75 billion. Even with record 1973-level cash receipts these payments barely could be met. With commodity prices plunging, millions of farmers do not have a chance. Already in 1974, U.S. farm income has declined by 15 per cent.

American farmers have been forced to mortgage everything they own to stay afloat at a time when according to a spokesman for David Rockefeller's Chase Manhattan, the bank's noose-tight credit policies are designed explicitly to collapse and consolidate the two and a half million farm units into 300,000 units by the end of the decade.

The point was driven home in an IPS interview with the agricultural expert of a midwestern regional bank servicing the farm belt. Blaming "farm problems" on the farmers themselves, he added: "Banks are not charitable institutions, you know."

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# **Livestock Industry Collapses; Meat to Disappear Soon**

June 30, (IPS) — In a matter of weeks meat, poultry and dairy products will have all but disappeared from grocers'

inflation and vanishing credit has routed and nearly destroyed entire sectors of world agriculture, particularly livestock and dairy production. Double-digit inflation and decimated real incomes are now forcing both farmers and workers of the capitalist nations toward Brazilian-like diets, while most of the underdeveloped countries face near or actual starvation.

The Labor Committees' campaign for an immediate united front around an Italian debt moratorium and related plans to feed Italy's working class is our only defense against this genocide. [See IPS No. 8]

Following in the footsteps of Italy, where meat was recently declared a taxable luxury and where importation of livestock has been barred, many countries are throwing up protectionist measures, slamming the door shut to any livestock imports. Japan has actually halted beef importation while the U.S. threatens import

restrictions. Such measures are decimating blows to exporting countries like Argentina, whose volume of exports has been reduced by over 50 per cent in the first five months of this year.

With such austerity measures abounding, worldwide consumption has been plummeting. In Britain alone, excluding the first half of this year (the period of most extreme austerity), consumption of meat has dropped by 8.5 per cent for beef and 10 per cent for mutton and lamb. In Denmark since April there has been a 7 per cent decline in the total pig herd and 4.6 per cent drop in the number of pregnant sows. This is not to mention the vast drops in consumption in the underdeveloped sector.

### **Rockefeller Forces EEC Bust**

Most indicative of this bust is the collapse of the livestock auction in Great Britain during the week of June 17 and the British sabotage of the EEC's price support policies. According to the British *Financial Times*, livestock producers' prices had fallen 5 to 30 per cent over a few days. Similar gouging of the U.S. market has occurred as prices, down 29 per cent in a year, dropped 10 per cent this past month.

The livestock farmers and peasants of the European Economic Community (EEC) are most immediately on the chopping block. Until recently the EEC farming community has been protected from falling prices by the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which until now has bought up surplus commodities at a fixed price.

But in recent months frequent purchases at the intervention prices resulted in the stockpiling of 40,000 to 50,000 metric tons of poultry in excess of the normal stocks as well as 110,000 tons of frozen beef. Private cold storage stocks are also bulging with red meat and poultry.

Now Rockefeller-run Great Britain has decided to stop its price-support program. Britain is demanding ineffectual slaughter premiums in place of the direct surplus purchase. In practice, this will substitute hot air for an effective price-cutting deterrent.

This sabotage, in the context of declining food consumption — particularly meat — can lead only to the scrapping of the entire livestock sector of European agriculture and the eventual destruction of the EEC itself.

### **Poultry Production Collapsing**

The British move against price supports has already led the EEC to reduce its price support of poultry, enforcing a reduction in production. EEC countries have agreed to reduce poultry production by at least 70,000 metric tons this year. The Netherlands and Germany, for example, have EEC directives to reduce poultry by 10 per cent.

Such plans are reminiscent of last summer's drowning of baby chicks by U.S. poultry producers and actually mark a signal for the depression-wrecked poultry industry to fold up shop. Denmark will hold a three-week slaughter moratorium in July, preceded by an appropriate gap in the hatching of eggs from the incubator. Other countries may adopt similar "adjustment mechanisms" according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture publication *Foreign Agriculture*. With similar high beef stockpiling, is a beef moratorium next?

### **Livestock Producers Strangled**

Livestock farmers and producers are being squeezed hard in an ever-tightening vise. On one end of the vise they are being squeezed by high prices for feed grain. U.S. beef producers are losing about \$150 on each head of steer raised to maturity simply because feed costs are that much more than the going market prices.

Farmers are squeezed even harder on the other end with the drying up of credit. Without credit, the livestock farmer and producer has no alternative but to liquidate his stock. One U.S. farmer who had dairy cattle on feed tried to get credit from three different banks. He failed and killed himself.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, the *New York Times*, and other Rockefeller henchmen's call for the defeat of a desperately needed subsidy for Government-guaranteed loans to livestock operators makes clear their intention to bring the industry down. Unabashed the *Times* in its June 30 editorial claims "There is no moral or economic justification for artificially restraining a drop in the output of grain-fed beef."

### **Grain Next**

The collapse of the livestock sector will trigger considerable destruction of world agriculture. The next sector to go will be grain. Indications are that grain prices have been held at an artificial high largely through Rockefeller-inspired rumors of bad weather, Rockefeller-controlled trading corporations (like Cargill) which maintain a controlling interest in grain commodities, and Rockefeller-created zero-growth campaigns for a World Food Bank. Obviously, once the bulk of the livestock is slaughtered, there will be little need for feed grain.

The desperation of the farming community should be obvious. Mr. William Young, chairman of the Scottish Milk Marketing Board, captures their present state of mind: "We do not know what the Government policy is going to be. We are unable to plan. There are many shivering on the brink of the industry wondering if they can carry on. The beef industry is in chaos. We don't know what to do."

Without any clear alternative, the only choice for Mr. Young and the thousands of others in similar positions is to drown the baby chicks, slaughter all the steers, and plow under 60 per cent of the feed grain (as British farmers currently are doing). Opting for this alternative means, without a doubt, the starvation of at least one billion human beings by the end of this decade. Every egg that is not hatched and every calf that is not born — especially considering that a steer requires two years' growth to achieve maturity — brings us closer to

Rockefeller's goal.

Peasants and small farmers, burdened with enormous debts and useless to a collapsed world agriculture, will be sent to resettlement camps for industrial slave labor. Their only alternative is to unite with the working class around a program of expanded reproduction. Immediately, European farmers and peasants must join the united front campaign Italian debt moratorium. This is the only way to prevent further declines in meat consumption in Italy and throughout Europe.