

USDA sets non-food priorities, outlines 'low-input' agriculture

by Marcia Merry

On Jan. 30 at 1:00 p.m., the curtain went up, in Jefferson Auditorium at the U.S. Department of Agriculture building in Washington, D.C., on a scene so crazy it would take a modern day Hieronymous Bosch to portray the lunacy. It was the opening of a two day USDA conference, entitled: "Listening to Farmers on Low-Input/Sustainable Agriculture."

The affair brought together about 150 hardcore Washington kooks in the environmentalist circuit, some media, and a roster of farmers to speak from the podium, to give an aura of legitimacy to the otherwise crazy speeches. A new element in the proceedings was the representation of banking demands—that credit to agriculture would be tied to following USDA orders on the environment.

The underlying presumption of the conference was that feeding people is not an issue in the world today. Foremost on the USDA agenda will be "saving the environment." There was no mention of the strategic food crisis now facing the world. The conference was conducted almost according to the outline of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov's speech to the United Nations Dec. 7 of last year, calling for a coordinated world ecology organization, to supercede economic considerations.

The USDA event marked the release of a new report from the Department, "A National Program for Soil and Water Conservation: The 1988-97 Update," January 1989. Nominally, this report is the latest fulfillment of a mandate to the Secretary of Agriculture to periodically report on the status of conservation programs for private and non-federal lands.

However, the new report goes beyond the bounds of both bureaucratic safeguards on national resources, and beyond the bounds of science itself. The summary of the report states that the two concerns of stopping soil erosion and protecting water quality should be the USDA's "top priorities."

The remainder of the 27-page report is an expansion of what is to be done on these matters, beginning with an introduction that mentions in passing why the USDA is no longer concerned with food output.

In the report's introductory section, "USDA Responds to Changing Conditions," it states, "Conditions have changed markedly since the Resources Conservation Act was first enacted. In 1977, prices of agricultural commodities, exports of those commodities, and the acreage of cropland were increasing. Famine was stalking many countries, and reports

of world resource degradation were increasing. Adding to the concern was a perception that technology, which had provided continuous increases in agricultural productivity for decades, was not likely to provide similar increases in the future.

"In the early 1980s, trends sharply reversed. World demand fell in response to a worldwide recession and serious debt problems in many importing countries. At the same time, world agricultural production was rising. In this country, the increased productive capacity that had been developed in response to a decade of rising demand and prices resulted in surpluses. New technologies, developed in response to higher prices, seemed likely to perpetuate the 'problem' of abundance."

The conclusion of the USDA is that "the public," in response to all this, is now demanding more "stewardship of soil and water resources"—especially because of all the "heightened public awareness" about conservation that has taken place in recent years thanks to the "Resources Conservation Act process." Of course, "the public" is not concerned, and should not be concerned, about its food supply.

This is all bureaucratic doublespeak for the fact that there has been a brainwashing campaign in recent years by government offices in the USDA, the Environmental Protection Agency, and others, and by elements of the private environmentalist lobby, to misinform the public on the nature of food production and environment requirements. So, the public doesn't know what is going on.

What is going on?

As of this year, the USDA and the international environmentalist lobby is going for broke on local, state, and federal laws to transform the U.S. food production sector from one based on the independent farmer and advanced technology, to a neo-feudalist system, in which virtual serfs toil on large landholdings controlled by the food cartel and related oligarchical interests. Concern for the environment is a cover story.

The deadly irony is that, if food and other essential output of goods and services are diminished by the actions of the "environmentalists," then the global ecosystem will decay to the point that famine, disease, and biological breakdown will threaten the very existence of the human race.

Here are the latest proposals of the USDA, from the conference and the January report.

The USDA report gives guidelines for the programs of eight USDA agencies for the 1988-97 period. These agencies cover agriculture research, the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service (crop programs, and the Commodity Credit Corp.), the Extension Service, the Soil Conservation Service, the Forest Service, the Cooperative State Research Service, and the Farmers Home Administration.

The twofold priority for all these agencies will be to 1) "Reduce the damage caused by excessive soil erosion on rural lands"; and 2) "Protect the quality of surface and ground water against harmful contamination from nonpoint sources and thereby maintain the quantity of water available for beneficial uses."

In both cases, soils and water, the major cause of destruction of resources is considered to be—agriculture!

The Jan. 30 and 31 conference was made up of two series of panels. On the first day, the series covered how credit for farming, inputs to farming (machinery, fertilizer, etc.), research, and marketing must all be approached from the point of view that questions of soil and water supercede food production. The second series of panels gave the "line" on how different types of farming must be approached to minimize presumed damage to the environment. There were sessions on horticulture, livestock, and field crops.

The conference and the report stressed that "partnerships" will now take place between state governments and local soil and water conservation districts to set priorities and define conservation goals. The implication throughout is that penalties will be levied against any farmer or other producer who may be deemed in violation of the new environmental goals.

The conference was conducted by an unprecedented grouping of private lobby groups alongside government agencies and individuals. Official co-sponsors included the American Farmland Trust, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, Rodale Institute, Soil and Water Conservation Society, the Fertilizer Institute, the National Agricultural Chemicals Association, and the American Farm Bureau Federation, as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

This is a "cold coup" by the international zero-growth lobby to take over the key farm institutions of the nation—credit, water infrastructure, transportation, and so forth.

Individuals officially participating in the conference and moderating panels included Rusty Jesser of the American Bankers Association, Kenneth Cook of the Conservation Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund, and Stephen Viederman of the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation. In an attempt to give a semblance of authority to some of these effete personalities, the USDA provided short biographies, which only underlined their personal character. For example, banker Rusty Jesser: "He is single and lives on a houseboat on the Potomac."

The smiling, "obey or else" tone of the conference was set by the keynote speaker, Will Erwin. For the past decade, he has been a consultant to the Environmental Protection Agency, and before that, worked in the Rural Development division of the USDA. In addition to his EPA work, Erwin is also on the board of directors of the Farm Credit System Assistance Board. Describing himself as a "compulsive tree planter," Erwin said, "We want lower cost programs in a safer environment." And, among many anecdotes, he spoke of a meeting last week with the Office of Management and Budget on how to do something about water quality. He stressed that the OMB officials have agreed, "We'll go for some funding, but if [the water quality program] must deliver right now . . . we want 'discipline by conscience' But if we don't get the job done this way, it will be done by enforcement."

This can mean fining farmers for manure washed downstream, or down a highway during a rainstorm, or almost anything else.

Within the next 12 months, new reports are going to be released by the EPA on traces of chemicals in the ground water. An initial report was released in December 1988 ("Pesticide Detections in Ground Water"). These will be used by the new government environmentalist mafia to undercut farming. Erwin said, "We're in turbulent times. . . . There is real potential for media shock in these upcoming times." He said that there has been success on the sodbuster issue, the swampbuster issue, and there will be success, or else, on the ground water issue.

And in Europe

The same "farming pollutes" campaign is being waged in the European Community. The EC Commission in Brussels has proposed to EC member nations that they take action to create "water protection regions"—including some of the richest farmland in Europe, such as the Po Valley, and set strict restrictions on farming, subject to heavy penalties and fines. The EC Commission recommends permitting only two cows per hectare, five sows per hectare, and so forth.

What is in reality most threatening to the environment in Western Europe, North America, and in other breadbasket regions around the world, is impoverishment of farmers. They are unable to use desired farming practices that would maintain productivity through *building up soils and herd size and quality*, and unable to maintain their equipment and water infrastructure. The top environmentalist strategists know this, and at the same time, know that the deterioration of domestic water supply and quality is the result of systematic obstruction of water management programs around the world—dams, canals, sewage treatment plants, irrigation systems, etc.

This is Satanic: Pseudo-environmentalism is being used to destroy family farmers and reduce food output—ultimately to cause the depopulation of the planet.