

Disaster Assistance Program Could Bolster Crop Insurance

By J. LINCOLN DEWAR
DRY, DRIER, DRIEST

Earlier this week it was noted in the press that the past month had been the driest April on record in fact probably the driest month of the year ever. Real concern is in evidence that the dry cycle may persist through May with real damage to forage crops and a question mark as well on other crops.

During the past two years we have been short about 20 inches of rainfall and most of the shortage occurred during April, May and June which are very important months for crop production. The question now is will the dry cycle extend into the third year and if so, does crop insurance will be the effects?

CROP INSURANCE

For the past few years crop insurance has applied to potatoes and grain generally. There has not been any great wave of enthusiasm on the part of farmers. On the present basis the likelihood of a farmer who really looks after his crops collecting anything worthwhile is quite remote at least with respect to potatoes and grain. With cash crops for processing the situation can be slightly different.

We would like to make it clear that the principle of crop insurance is certainly good as far as it goes but there appears to be a regrettable tendency on the part of governments to use it as an excuse for not taking action when disaster overtakes branches of agriculture. Possibly what is needed in addition to crop insurance is a form of disaster assistance when real serious problems develop.

NEW TIMOTHY

Among all the grasses it has been pretty difficult to improve on timothy for reliability and durability. Its worse defect has been slow regrowth and a high percentage of stem. Now a variety called "champ" has been developed at the Dominion Experimental Farm. The new development is reported to be much superior in the production of aftermath with shorter, leafier growth with a dense stand of flowering stems and a heavy basal leaf growth. Seeds should be in general supply in 1968.

ELECTION THOUGHTS

Only 25 days remain until election date and so far there has been little or nothing in the way of platforms produced for the voter to get his teeth into. We are assuming, of course, that the voters to a man stand open minded and prepared to consider the issues (whatever they may be) and the proposals of the different candidates and political parties in the most objective fashion disregarding all other considerations such as the political affiliation of grandparents and whether Aunt Mary's young fellow did or not get the job

which he had been promised at the last election. We suspect that to many people of very great importance and one taken very seriously, much more seriously in fact than is taken by the people who actually run the government.

FOUR GROUPS

Using the 1961 census for a guide farmers can be divided into four groups.

1. Fourteen percent of the farmers with gross sales of \$10,000 per year or more accounted for about 40 percent of total sales of farm products.

2. Twenty percent of the farmers with gross sales of \$5,000 to \$10,000 account for 30 percent of total sales.

3. Twenty-five percent with gross sales \$2,500 to \$5,000 account for 20 percent of total sales.

4. About 40 percent with gross sales under \$2,500 account for only 10 percent of total sales.

Physical output per farm worker is approximately double that of a generation ago. There has been a steady substitution of capital for labor and while there has been little change in the land area, output has increased by 35 percent.

Consumption has been increasing at the rate of two percent per annum, which is about the rate of population growth, while food production has been increasing two and one-half percent per annum, and this has pressure on prices.

The individual farmer who is an innovator and adopts new and improved technology gains, but the farmer who is late in adopting the new techniques usually finds that his increased production commands a reduced price. All that the new technology thus does for him is to maintain him in his previous unsatisfactory position.

FEED SITUATION

With grass almost in sight (providing it rains) cattlemen can be expected to have a feeling of relief. Generally no real serious shortage of forage appears to have developed. The explanation here would appear to be the fact that cattle numbers must have been cut down, that it was a very favourable winter and that the available hay was of very good quality.

For the fifth of May the grass is probably better than average but based on the time elapsed since the snow left it is certainly nothing special. High winds, cold and lack of moisture have

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K. R. Patrick States Views

MONTREAL (CP)—K. R. Patrick, a Canadian industrialist and businessman, said here eight islands of the British West Indies should be invited

to join with Canada in a monetary and customs union. He said arrangements also should be made for Canada to provide "defence and external affairs representation" for the islands.

"Each of these key items (should) be part of a broad economic plan through which Canada will invest substantial amounts of money over the next few years."

Mr. Patrick is senior partner in K. R. Patrick and Associates, a Montreal-based firm of business consultants.

He also is president of Mari-got Investments Ltd. of Nassau, which operates throughout the West Indies.

He told the Rotary Club of Montreal: "I submit that Canada's external aid policy should be amended to program not less than \$20,000,000 a year in direct investment in these islands in addition to substantial amounts of Canadian expertise over a minimum period of 10 years."

Britain, said Mr. Patrick, can no longer be looked to as a source of substantial aid to the islands—Barbados, Antigua, St. Kitts, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada.

"The islands need Canada because they need a partner willing to invest money, manpower and know-how on some equitable basis for the long-term future," said Mr. Patrick. "They (also) need markets."

Canada seemed to be a logical choice because of proximity, solid trade ties, Commonwealth membership, common traditions and other factors.

He said he did not include Jamaica and Trinidad in his plan since "both possess a viable economy." He excluded other areas sometimes associated with the West Indies.

British Guiana, soon to be independent, is "part of the continent of South America" while "Bermuda and the Bahamas will undoubtedly retain their colonial status for a long time."

Barbados, Mr. Patrick said, will be an independent member of the Commonwealth by the end of this year, while Antigua will "become a self-governing state in free association with Britain."

The other six islands "will most certainly achieve" the same status as Antigua, he said.

This is a key time for Canada to act and "Britain will welcome Canadian participation in the eastern Caribbean."

Queens: Mrs. Charles Jones, R.R. No. 1, Charlottetown; J.J. Mustard; Parkdale; Mrs. Horace B. Willis, Kingston.

Officials For Census Appointed

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics has announced a list of census commissioners for the 1966 census of Canada. For the various electoral districts in this province they are:

Kings: Mrs. Mildred Campbell, R.R. No. 2, Little Harbour, Souris; Athol Robertson, Montague.

Prince: William Athol Cotton, Kensington; J. Morrison, Summerside; Joseph Benoit, Des-Roches; Mistouche; Andrew B. Wells, Alberton.

PLAN PLANT FOR RUSSIA

TURIN, Italy (AP)—An Italian news agency said Wednesday the Fiat automobile company would build a 200,000,000-litre (\$32,500,000) plant in the Soviet Union to produce 80 to 1, cars daily of medium-cylinder capacity. A spokesman for Fiat said: "All we can say is that negotiations are continuing." The socialist news agency ADN-Kronos said a final agreement would be signed this week.

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