

such arable acreage available, we must turn elsewhere to meet this inevitable demand. Alternatives include extending our hegemony over foreign and probably already overcrowded lands, a course repulsive to our very national ethics, or embarking on an intensive population control plan, a matter of great political and spiritual controversy (but none the less inevitable), or we can turn to science and research and expand our food and fiber production far beyond the furthest reaches of our present horizons. We are, in fact, doing this now, for our food production is increasing as rapidly as our population, at least for the present.

In this land of apparently interminable surpluses, we have become not only physically surfeited but complacently apathetic about our food supply. The relatively small cost of our surplus is today a major political issue, yet it is really a minor expense for the insurance it bestows upon the income of the farmer and the cost of food to the consumer. A five per cent food surplus costs the nation only a fraction of what a similar deficit would cost the housewife in increased food prices.

The biblical Joseph stored a surplus of grain in ancient Egypt for the seven lean years, and has been accorded the wisdom of the ages for so doing. Today our surplus would hardly carry us for seven lean months, and if used to feed the hungry peoples around the world, it would be exhausted in less than two months. Thus even with our proficient agriculture and our surplus abundance we are, in fact, not more than a year or two away, at the very most, from starvation right here in America. This, then, is the frame of reference within which any major factor affecting agriculture must be viewed.

“FOOD EXPLOSION” NEEDED

So apart from a general world population control—a “peplo-stat”—the only factor which can possibly relieve the increasing international stress is a “food production explosion” to match that of the world population. Although it is obvious that some form of population control is inevitable, a world “food production explosion” is now quite feasible.

Indeed, such has already taken place in the United States during the past 50 years and it can continue with accelerated tempo. If political, social and particularly religious mores can be swiftly swept aside, an equally effective “food explosion” can be accomplished around the world within the next half-century, to the immense relief of most of the international tensions which disturb mankind today.

The Foreign Research Service of the U.S.D.A. has recently computed that the total deficiency of food in the world today aggregates 46 million metric tons of protein-calorie equivalent, which represents 35 per cent of current U. S. milk production plus 45 per cent of bean and pea production