

## Official Papers

## World Food Situation

The State of Food and Agriculture 1953—Part I. Review and Outlook. By Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rome, August 1953.

FOR the first time since 1939, world production of foodgrains has caught up with the growth of population. This only means that per capita availability of foodgrains on a global basis has regained the pre-war level, not that the pre-war per capita consumption, by no means adequate even then on any standard of nutrition or calories, has yet been restored. This is because production has expanded rapidly only in the agriculturally advanced countries. In North America, in particular, it has far outstripped the growth of population, per capita consumption has improved and so have exports but at the same time large stocks have recently begun to accumulate, in a disquieting manner. On the other hand, though a good deal of progress has been made in the less-developed regions, productivity per man and per acre remains low and consumption woefully inadequate. In the Far East, per capita consumption is much lower than before the war.

The differences in agricultural production between the more developed and less developed countries have tended to widen and the per capita increase in food production derived from the global average has not brought much relief to the 70 per cent of the world population in the undeveloped countries. Another aspect of this disparity is the accumulation of stocks of foodstuffs in the dollar area and of raw materials in some other countries, together with the downward trend of agricultural prices, inevitably giving rise to fears of burdensome surpluses. The Director General of FAO feels that this is a disturbing situation, for world population will continue to grow, perhaps at an accelerated pace, as better medical services and, in some cases, better nutrition lengthen the life span in the less developed countries.

To raise the average diet of the people in the undeveloped areas to the present average for the world, which is only half the North American level, would require an additional supply of food equal to the total 1952-53 production of North America and Oceania combined. More than 90 per cent of this additional supply would be needed in the Far East. Where lies the hard

## WORLD PRODUCTION OF PRINCIPAL FOODGRAINS

	billion metric tons)					
	1934-38	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952
<b>WHEAT:</b>						
Canada	7.17	10.52	10.11	12.57	15.04	18.72
United States	19.48	35.75	31.06	27.74	26.88	35.16
Argentina	6.63	5.20	5.14	5.80	2.10	7.80
Australia	4.20	5.19	5.94	5.01	4.34	5.25
World Total excl USSR	128.80	145.40	140.70	142.70	142.20	164.30
<b>COARSE GRAINS:</b>						
North America	79.7	132.6	118.9	116.2	113.6	121.8
South America	17.3	13.3	10.9	13.7	12.0	16.4
(Argentina)	(9.4)	(5.1)	(2.1)	(4.8)	(3.9)	(7.3)
Western Europe	42.5	37.4	39.4	37.2	42.4	40.1
Others	77.4	78.6	79.8	76.6	82.2	83.2
World Total excl USSR	216.9	261.9	249.0	243.7	250.2	261.5
<b>RICE:</b>						
China	50.5	46.3	44.9	46.7	48.3	..
India	34.2	30.3	35.3	30.9	31.6	35.0
Pakistan	11.2	12.8	12.4	12.5	11.8	12.5
Japan	11.5	11.5	11.9	12.1	11.3	12.4
Thailand	4.4	4.6	6.7	6.8	7.2	6.5
Burma	7.0	3.8	5.2	5.2	5.5	5.8
Other Asia	26.0	21.6	25.3	25.1	25.5	26.8
Other countries	6.4	9.4	11.3	11.6	11.6	12.0
World Total excl USSR	151.2	140.3	153.0	150.9	152.8	160.0

## INDEX NUMBERS OF VOLUME OF FOOD PRODUCTION

Region	1948-49- 1950-51			1951-52	1952-53
	1934-38 = 100				
	1948-49	1950-51	1951-52		
North Western and Southern Europe	..	104	114	114	
North America	..	139	138	146	
Latin America	..	127	124	134	
Oceania	..	112	106	118	
Far East (excluding China)	..	99	100	103	
Near East	..	115	124	133	
Africa	..	123	132	134	
All above regions	..	115	119	123	
World*	..	110	113	117	

## POPULATION

World (excluding USSR, Eastern Europe and China)	..	..	118	121	123
World*	..	..	112	115	117

\* including estimates for USSR, Eastern Europe and China.

## INDEX NUMBERS OF FOOD PRODUCTION PER CAPUT

North Western and Southern Europe	..	95	103	101
North America	..	119	114	118
Latin America	..	97	91	96
Oceania	..	96	85	94
Far East (excluding China)	..	83	82	82
Near East	..	97	102	107
Africa	..	105	108	109
All above regions	..	98	98	100
World (incl USSR Eastern Europe and China)	..	97	98	100

core of the world's food problem, Compared with the physical needs of the deficit countries, food stocks now accumulating in the countries of more advanced agriculture is quantitatively insignificant. But compared with their ability to pay, disposal of stocks threatens to become a serious problem.

The only redeeming feature is the change in the pattern of trade in agricultural products between the regions. It has resulted from the expanding food requirements of the less developed regions of the world, due partly to the increasingly rapid growth of their populations and partly to the spread of industry, ruining and other non-agricultural pursuits which bring with them a demand for higher standards of living, hood production in these regions has not kept pace with the growing demand, which has been partly met by reduced food exports and partly by larger imports. The combined effect is that net exports of food from the less developed areas have fallen even more sharply than gross exports. On the other hand, while North America's exports of food have increased—it accounts for half the net interregional movements of foodstuffs—it has also increased its imports of non-food agricultural products—coffee, rubber and wool, and others. There has also been a markedly greater rise in the prices of the agricultural products which North America imports compared to the prices of those it exports. This is particularly true of United States. "This has so largely offset the opposite trend in the volume of trade that in terms of value, North America has remained a small net importer of agricultural products."

After a period of great scarcity, the rice position has eased though the volume of rice entering into world trade has not expanded as much, as the increase in the world production occurred in the rice deficit countries. Continued high prices has been a factor restricting the volume of rice entering into world trade.

Excepting Thailand, most of the rice growing countries in Asia reported larger crops in 1952-53, the most notable increase having been achieved in India. The larger crops however did not become available before the beginning of this year. Throughout 1952 therefore the demand for rice continued very strong and whatever was offered by exporters was readily absorbed. Some exporting countries held back stocks in the hope of obtaining still higher prices.

This, however, did not materialise with the result that some of these stocks has suffered from long storage. Export trade was thus limited and failed to reach the level of 1951 which itself was very low compared to pre-war, though substantially better than in the immediately preceding years.

The three leading exporters were still Thailand, Burma and the USA. Italy and China now occupy the fourth and fifth places, French bolside of Indo-China having slipped out this rice bowl of Asia, the third leading exporter in prewar days, from the rest of the world. Egypt practically ceased to be an exporter.

Among importers, Japan took the largest share with India second and Indonesia third. Europe continued to reduce its gross imports. Japan is expected to maintain her rate of imports and Korea, a large exporter upto the early years of the war, to expand hers considerably. On the other hand, both India and Indonesia sharply reduced their import estimates and total import plans, unless revised may, for the first time in years, fall below export availabilities. Reduction in imports was

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forced by consideration of price which rose almost continuously while that of alternative foodstuffs fell.

The favourable factors responsible for the larger crops continue to operate but they are counterbalanced by the fact that in many countries—with the notable exception of the US—farmers are still not allowed to reap benefits directly of higher export prices. Production in Burma benefited from more peaceful conditions, not from the incentive of higher prices, while that in Indo-China has been suffering from extension of the warfare, the outcome of which will be a foremost factor in determining the future of rice supplies in Asia.

As a long term factor, it is probable that the substitution of rice by other grains in many countries in Asia, and the striking changes that food habits of these people have undergone owing to rice shortage, may permanently influence the imports of rice in the rice deficient countries. Some shifts in demand between rice and other foodstuffs are however bound to occur. The policy of governments as regards food subsidies is important here.

### WORLD PRODUCTION OF RICE (Paddy)

Area	1934-38	1946-47	1949-50	1950-51	1951-52	1952-53
		average	(revised)	(revised)	(provisional)	
China*	50.5	@46.3	@44.9	@46.7	@48.3	...
India	34.2	30.3	35.3	30.9	31.6	@35.0
Pakistan	11.2	12.8	12.4	12.5	11.8	12.5
Japan	11.5	11.5	11.9	12.1	11.3	12.4
Thailand	4.4	4.6	6.7	6.8	@7.2	@6.5
Burma	7.0	3.8	@5.2	@5.2	5.5	5.8
Other Asia	26.0	21.6	25.3	25.1	25.5	26.8
Total, Asia	144.8	130.9	141.7	139.3	141.2	148.0
Other continents	6.4	9.4	11.3	11.6	11.6	12.0
World Total						
(excl USSR)	151.2	140.3	153.0	150.9	152.8	160.0

\* 22 provinces and Manchuria. @ Unofficial estimate. ... Not available.

### MAJOR RICE EXPORTING AND IMPORTING COUNTRIES

	(million metric tons, milled)					
	1934-38	1950	1951	1952	1953	
	(Average)				(Forecast)	
<b>Exporters:</b>						
Thailand	.. 1.4	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.2	
Burma	.. 3.1	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	
United States	.. 0.1	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8	
Indo-China	.. 1.3	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	
Italy	.. 0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	
China	.. —	—	0.1†	0.2	0.3	
Other Asia	.. 1.7	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	
Other areas	.. 0.2	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.2	
<b>Importers:</b>						
China	.. 0.7	0.1	—	—	—	
Japan	.. 1.7	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	
India	.. 1.8	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.6	
Malaya	.. 0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	
Indonesia	.. 0.3	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.5	
Other Asia	.. 0.9	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.2	
Other areas	.. 2.0	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.9	

† China was a net importer of rice before 1951.