

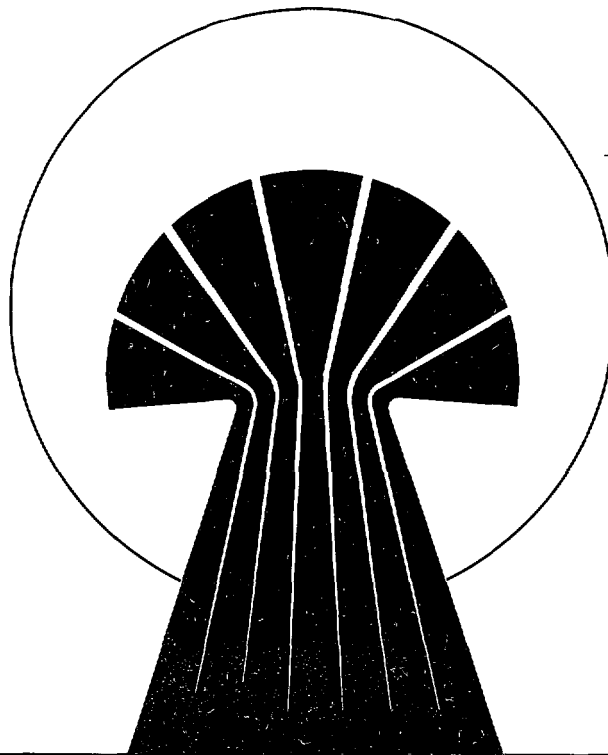


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# FOOD

Food Related Reports Issued from  
January 1977 through December 1979



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
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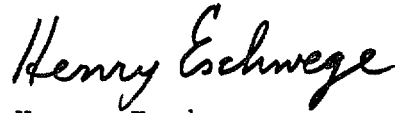
OTHER

FOREWORD

The Community and Economic Development Division, GAO's lead division for reviews of food programs and policy, prepared this pamphlet which includes summaries of GAO reports directly and indirectly related to food. Beginning on page 59 it also contains an index.

For more information on past and current food assignments, please contact William E. Gahr, Senior Group Director, Food Coordination and Analysis Staff, on (202) 275-5525.

Instructions for ordering reports are on the inside back cover.



Henry Eschwege  
Director, CED

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THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION'S FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE SYSTEM FOR SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES: PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS. FPCD-76-99, January 24, 1977.

The Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare has progressed considerably in the past year in developing its system for special Government employees to protect against conflicts of interest. These employees are hired as temporary staff to provide specialized advice. GAO recommends that the Food and Drug Administration finalize development of policy and supporting procedures. Various errors and inconsistencies in the case files resulted from the lack of definitive policy. GAO also recommends (1) procedures to make sure that special Government employees do not participate in restricted matters and (2) improvements in the system to publicly reveal controversial interests.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE SYSTEM FOR DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE EMPLOYEES NEEDS STRENGTHENING. FPCD-77-17, January 31, 1977.

Standards of ethical conduct for Government officials are prescribed by an Executive order of the President. In line with this order, the Department of Agriculture developed a financial disclosure system for its employees. GAO noted weaknesses in this system and recommends improved procedures for identifying employees who should be required to file financial disclosure statements, for ensuring prompt collection of statements from all employees required to file, and for reviewing financial disclosure statements.

THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL COMMODITY DONATIONS ON THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM. CED-77-32, January 31, 1977.

Purchase and distribution of commodities for the school lunch program by Department of Agriculture go a long way toward meeting the needs of school districts. However, some improvements are needed to make the school lunch program more effective and responsive to such needs.

Schools districts in one State receive cash to buy commodities instead of receiving commodities from the Department. Essentially, commodity costs to the State's larger districts seem to be comparable to the Department's but costs to the smaller districts appear to be higher.

PROCEDURAL OPERATIONS OF THE FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN WISCONSIN. CED-77-29,  
February 10, 1977.

This report contains summary data on

- shuffling of personnel between county offices,
- adequacy of supervisory training,
- establishment of one-stop service centers, and
- delays in processing loans in county offices.

TO PROTECT TOMORROW'S FOOD SUPPLY SOIL CONSERVATION NEEDS  
PRIORITY ATTENTION. CED-78-30, February 14, 1977.

This report finds that the money and technical help the Department of Agriculture gives farmers to help control soil erosion could be used more wisely. Loss of top soil reduces the productivity of the soil for present and future generations and contributes to the pollution of our air and water. The report recommends that USDA should seek out and offer assistance to farmers with the most severe erosion problems and should give priority assistance to erosion control measures that provide critically needed and enduring soil conservation benefits.

INFORMATION ON A DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CLAIM AGAINST  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO. CED-77-40, February 24,  
1977.

This report discusses a \$2.5 million claim of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service against the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The claim, one of the largest ever involving Agriculture's domestic commodity distribution programs, concerns spoilage or infestation of federally donated food during fiscal year 1975 when the Commonwealth's needy family food donation program ended and its food stamp program began.

The report summarizes information on events preceding and following establishment of the claim, factors affecting the phaseout of the needy family food donation program in the Commonwealth, official documentation of the final disposition of the spoiled or infested commodities, and the status of the claim. The report does not contain GAO conclusions on responsibility for the commodity losses or the validity of dollar amounts in the claim.

SUMMARY OF GAO REPORTS ISSUED SINCE 1973 PERTAINING TO  
FARM BILL LEGISLATION. CED-77-39, March 3, 1977.

GAO has issued over 50 reports since the Farm Bill was last renewed in 1973 which pertain to programs authorized by that legislation and related issues. These reports address such subjects as:

- Farm and commodity support issues, including
  - export subsidies,
  - commodity shortages,
  - import restrictions,
  - commodity forecasting,
  - meat inspection,
  - pesticide control, and
  - agricultural research.
- Disaster assistance.
- Grain reserves.
- Food assistance (Public Law 480) and foreign agricultural development.
- Grain inspection.
- Rural development.
- Food stamps.

This report briefly summarizes and updates these reports to assist the Congress in its current deliberations concerning renewal and possible modification of the Farm Bill.

PROBLEMS AFFECTING USEFULNESS OF THE NATIONAL WATER  
ASSESSMENT. CED-77-50, March 23, 1977.

The law requires a periodic assessment of the Nation's water supplies and requirements. In developing the current assessment, with 1975 as the base year and projections to the year 2000, the Council, its Federal member agencies, and cooperating State and regional agencies have experienced problems which may adversely affect the reliability and usefulness of the assessment. Steps should be taken to make the final document more responsive to the needs of the intended user agencies; and before undertaking future assessments, the Council should reappraise the objectives of the project and the methodology of developing an adequate national water data base.

NATIONWIDE FOOD CONSUMPTION SURVEY: NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION. CED-77-56, March 25, 1977.

The survey's sample is too small to provide useful information in evaluating food assistance programs and in identifying nutritional problems of low-income families. Additional low-income families should be sampled to provide this information. The methodology for obtaining this information has not been fully validated, and the survey results will be open to criticism. There are no assurances that the data obtained will actually measure the amount of food consumed. The Secretary of Agriculture should fully validate the Nationwide Food Consumption Survey methodology either before or during the survey.

THE SUMMER FEEDING PROGRAM--HOW TO FEED THE CHILDREN AND STOP PROGRAM ABUSES. CED-77-59, April 15, 1977.

Serious abuses--criminal as well as administrative--have occurred in the summer feeding program. Most have involved private nonprofit organizations which comprised three-agency sponsors, such as schools and park departments, operated programs relatively free of abuses. The Department of Agriculture revised the program's regulations to try to prevent abuses. GAO is recommending additional changes covering sponsor and site selection and termination, contracting procedures, State staffing and monitoring, sponsor recordkeeping, and advances of funds. Many of these changes would not be necessary if only schools and public agencies were permitted to be sponsors. GAO is recommending that the program's authorizing legislation be revised to authorize only schools and public agencies as sponsors. GAO is also recommending legislative changes dealing with administrative funds for States and sponsors, definitions of eligible sponsors and children, the number of food services allowed each day, and the issuance of program regulations.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ISSUES FOR PLANNING. CED-77-61, April 22, 1977.

This study identifies and describes what are believed to be the critical food and agricultural issues facing the Congress and the Nation. Each of these issues are tied into a series of "food system goals" which could represent the main elements of a national food policy. The issues and goals represent the perspective GAO uses to organize its own activities. In its original form, this study was prepared as an internal

guide to aid GAO work efforts in food and agriculture issues and programs.

NEW APPROACH NEEDED TO CONTROL PRODUCTION OF MAJOR CROPS IF SURPLUSES AGAIN OCCUR. CED-77-57, April 25, 1977.

During the 1971-73 crop years, the Commodity Credit Corporation paid farmers \$7.6 billion to set aside, or not farm, cropland. This was to prevent excessive supplies of wheat, feed grains, and cotton from accumulating. This was only partly effective in reducing production primarily because some cropland, which would have been set aside anyway as a normal farming practice--summer fallow--was allowed by the Department of Agriculture to qualify for Federal payment. About \$800 million was paid for setting aside wheat land that would not have been farmed anyway. Because stocks of major crops could again become excessive, the Secretary of Agriculture should develop a legislative and administrative proposal, considering the summer fallow practice, to control production of crops that may become too abundant.

ISSUES SURROUNDING THE MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS. Volume I and II. ID-76-87, May 2, 1977.

Agriculture's export reporting system needs to provide more accurate and timely export sales data. U.S. food policy needs more cohesion and flexibility to meet domestic and international objectives and changing food supply/demand conditions. By legislation the Congress should provide for an improved export reporting system to function as an effective early warning system and should direct that a food export policy be established that protects the interests of U.S. producers and consumers. That policy should also clarify the Government's position on grain sales to nonmarket economies.

ADMINISTRATION OF MARKETING ORDERS FOR FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. (Released May 15, 1977). B-177170, December 11, 1974.

The report discusses how the Department of Agriculture administered marketing agreements, particularly the Florida tomato marketing order during fiscal year 1974. In addition, GAO reviewed the administration of one marketing agreement for celery and four for oranges during that year.



THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM--HOW THE U.S. CAN HELP IMPROVE IT.  
ID-77-16, May 16, 1977.

The World Food Program provides food aid to developing countries. The United States, its largest contributor, has a compelling interest in the success of the Program. Although demand for World Food Program assistance is high, the Program doesn't have an adequate long range planning system. Priorities are needed so that its aid reaches the poorest nations, as defined by the United Nations. Improvements are also needed in the Program's audit procedures. GAO is making recommendations to help the World Food Program establish long range planning procedures, develop a system of priorities, and expand its audit coverage.

THE UNITED STATES SHOULD PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS. ID-77-13,  
May 16, 1977.

This report discusses the growth in U.S. financial support to the Food and Agriculture Organization and recommends specific U.S. actions to improve the Organization's programing, budgeting, and program evaluation systems. To improve U.S. administration, GAO recommends that the President clarify the Secretary of State's responsibility for directing executive branch efforts. The Secretary should define precise U.S. objectives in the Organization and delineate functions and responsibilities of each U.S. agency. GAO recommends that the U.S. express concern over the Organization's recent inclusion of developmental activities in its assessed budget and reiterate U.S. policy that U.N. development activities should be financed by voluntary contributions and centrally programed through the U.N. Development Program, particularly the Agency for International Development.

FEDERAL DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS SHOULD NOT BE MADE FOR CROPS NOT GROWN. CED-77-77, May 24, 1977.

The Commodity Credit Corporation is making an estimated \$135 million in deficiency payments to rice farmers for the 1976 rice crop. These payments are based on the extent that the national average market price received by rice farmers was below a target price established by law. About \$5 million of this amount will be paid for rice not grown and thus not marketed. The situation in which payments would be made on unplanted and thus unmarketed crops could arise under the

1977 rice, wheat, and feed grain programs and under future programs for these crops should current legislation be extended. Legislative proposals have been made to preclude deficiency payments on unplanted crops. Some such legislation should be enacted.

GOVERNMENT REGULATORY ACTIVITY: JUSTIFICATIONS, PROCESSES, IMPACTS, AND ALTERNATIVES. PAD-77-34, June 3, 1977.

This report reviews the debate over Government regulations and develops a structure for reviewing regulatory problems. These include

- the continued appropriateness of some regulatory objectives,
- the alleged imposition of substantial economic costs on society,
- the effect of regulation on the distribution of income,
- the administrative structure of regulation, and
- the range of regulatory reform alternatives.

MARKETING MEAT: ARE THERE ANY IMPEDIMENTS TO FREE TRADE? CED-77-81, June 6, 1977.

Union/management agreements in some cities, mainly in the Midwest, restricted the form or hours in which certain meats could be marketed. The use of such restrictions appeared to be declining and they were estimated to affect less than 10 percent of the population. More effective actions are needed in dealing with commercial bribery in the meat industry which, according to the Department of Agriculture, is widespread and limits competition. Several pending court suits filed by cattle producers allege manipulation and fixing of meat prices by certain slaughterhouses, principal national food chains, and a private meat price reporting service. The suits were still pending as of April 1977.

FEDERAL EFFORTS TO PROTECT CONSUMERS FROM POLYBROMINATED BIPHENYL CONTAMINATED FOOD PRODUCTS. HRD-77-96, June 8, 1977.

In 1973 an industrial chemical containing polybrominated biphenyls was mistaken for magnesium oxide, a feed supplement, and mixed with animal feed in Michigan. The report discusses what the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration are doing to protect consumers from foods contaminated with polybrominated biphenyls.

LANDSAT'S ROLE IN AN EARTH RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM. PSAD-77-58, June 10, 1977.

Landsat is NASA's experimental project to determine the usefulness of satellite-acquired data for the management of the Earth's environment and natural resources. Cost for the first three missions and a proposed fourth mission are estimated at up to \$656 million. But greater questions than cost must also be faced. Possible evolution from an experimental project to an operational system raises many such questions which require study. The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President, should undertake such a study with the objective of suggesting the Government's role in satellite-based remote-sensing technology.

FOOD STAMP RECEIPTS--WHO'S WATCHING THE MONEY? CED-77-76, June 15, 1977.

Misuses and mishandling of over \$34 million in food stamp receipts went undetected for extended periods because neither the Food and Nutrition Service nor the States were effectively monitoring the agents which sold food stamps. Known major weaknesses in the monitoring system at both levels were allowed to continue for years without adequate efforts to correct them. Reported deposits were not verified, agents' depositing patterns were not monitored, and there was no followup when agents failed to submit required reports. The Service's computer-produced management reports, designed to identify problem agencies, were not usable because they listed too many agents without problems, as well as agents with problems. Some improvements have been made, but much more still needs to be done. GAO is recommending ways to correct problems with the monitoring system. Also, GAO believes the Service should retain a strong active role in the day-to-day monitoring of agent accountability in cooperation with the States.

NEED TO CONSIDER POPULATION GROWTH IN SAHEL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING. ID-77-40, June 17, 1977.

As part of a worldwide review of the need to integrate population and development assistance, GAO observed that population growth was not being adequately considered in the multi-donor, multibillion dollar, long-range development program for the Sahel region of Africa. The Agency for International Development agreed with our findings and reported that it is planning to help correct the situation. Distribution of this report is limited to U.S. Government officials.

GROUND WATER: AN OVERVIEW. CED-77-69, June 21, 1977.

The Nation's ground water should be managed and cared for like the precious commodity that it is--especially in arid States. GAO is attempting to direct attention to ground water as an important natural resource, and it raises questions about ground water management, conservation, and uses which warrant attention by the Congress and study by Federal and State agencies.

IMPACT OF POPULATION ASSISTANCE TO AN AFRICAN COUNTRY. ID-77-3, June 23, 1977.

Rapid population growth combined with poor social and economic conditions is hindering development efforts in many nations. African birthrates are among the world's highest, and population growth rates are expected to increase as improved health care lowers mortality. Ghana is one African nation that has recognized its population problem, promulgated an official population policy, and established a family planning program. The United States has provided about 75 percent of the \$15.9 million of population assistance to Ghana. Ghana's program, however, has reached only a small percentage of the population, primarily urban. GAO believes changes are needed if the population growth rate is to be lowered significantly and recommends actions the Agency should take, including integration of population and development assistance, to meet this objective.

U.S PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. ID-77-36, June 24, 1977.

GAO's recent reviews of U.S. involvement in international organizations show a continuing need for the executive branch

to upgrade this aspect of U.S. foreign affairs. The management of U.S. participation in these organizations should be strengthened and the process of recruiting qualified Americans to work in them should be improved. These improvements on the part of the U.S. Government can make the U.S. more influential in working with other members toward improved management in the organizations themselves.

NEED TO ESTABLISH SAFETY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTIBIOTICS USED IN ANIMAL FEEDS. HRD-77-81, June 27, 1977.

Antibiotics are used at low levels in the feed of most food-producing animals to promote growth and prevent disease. Because many of these antibiotics are also used to treat disease in humans or animals, the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria due to the use of antibiotics in animal feeds may lessen the effectiveness of antibiotics in treating human and animal diseases. The Food and Drug Administration has permitted the continued use of low levels of a number of antibiotics in animal feed even though the safety and effectiveness of such use has not been established. On April 15, 1977, the agency's Commissioner announced the decision to restrict the use of penicillin, tetracyclines, and salphaquinoxaline used in animal feeds.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION'S PROGRAM FOR REGULATING IMPORTED PRODUCTS NEEDS IMPROVING. HRD-77-72, July 5, 1977.

Lack of information on products entering the United States limits the effectiveness of the Food and Drug Administration's efforts to regulate imported products before they are sold to the American public. Without such data the agency cannot determine how effective its import surveillance is, it cannot assess the extent that imports may be violating law or regulations, and it has no assurance that all imported products are inspected periodically. Given FDA's limited coverage of imported products at the various U.S. ports of entry, additional surveillance measures are needed, particularly against those imported products which continually violate its regulations.

RESTRICTIONS ON USING MORE FERTILIZER FOR FOOD CROPS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. ID-77-6, July 5, 1977.

Developing countries could produce more food by using more fertilizer. Steps have been taken to produce more fertilizer, but its use is often hindered by the individual countries' policies and institutional constraints. The U.S. should work with other donors of fertilizer assistance to

- induce recipient governments to revise policies which prevent increasing fertilizer use on food crops, and
- incorporate, where appropriate, a requirement in new agreements for development assistance that developing nations take affirmative action to remove such constraints.

PUBLIC RANGELANDS CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE. CED-77-88, July 5, 1977.

The Nation's public rangelands have been deteriorating for years and for the most part, are not improving. Deterioration can be attributed principally to poorly managed livestock grazing. These lands need to be protected through more aggressive and effective management by the Bureau of Land Management. To minimize further damage the Bureau should

- be sure that existing land management plans meet current needs;
- discontinue destructive continuous grazing on lands;
- seek assistance from livestock operators in providing essential range improvement facilities; and
- keep the Congress informed about its actions to improve range conditions and the adverse effect of insufficient staffing through the annual report, as required by law.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ISSUES FACING THE NATION.  
CED-77-92, July 8, 1977.

The need to protect human health and the environment from pollution has become clearly evident. The Federal Government has responded by enacting far-reaching legislation which could cost an estimated half a trillion dollars over the next few decades. Questions have been raised on whether the environmental goals are too costly to achieve or whether the right balance has been struck between environmental objectives and energy, economic, and social "goals." As part of a continuing reassessment of critical national issues, and as an aid in focusing its own objectives, GAO has tried to identify the environmental program areas most in need of attention. This study describes and identifies the major environmental issues facing the Congress and the Nation.

IMPACT OF POPULATION ASSISTANCE TO AN ASIAN COUNTRY.  
ID-77-10, July 12, 1977.

More than half the world's people live in Asia, and their number is increasing rapidly. Most Asian countries have programs to slow the population growth rate. This report deals with the program in Pakistan. The high annual growth rate of about 3 percent in Pakistan is one of the country's most serious problems. Growth rate reduction objectives, however, have not been met even though about \$164 million has been devoted to the problem since 1960, including about \$59 million in U.S. assistance. Program difficulties appear to be the social, economic, and cultural norms of a largely subsistence-level society and the need for greater government support. Lessons learned by the Agency for International Development in Pakistan can serve as a guide in considering the nature and level of support in other countries.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE MODELS FOR POLICY ANALYSIS. CED-77-87,  
July 13, 1977.

In recent years, a large number of computer-based models have been developed to help the agriculture community analyze trends, identify problems, and evaluate policy alternatives. GAO identified over 50 models with potential for food and agricultural issue analysis. These models vary by scope, size, methodology, and issues covered. They can be viewed as a hierarchical set of analytical tools which can be used to address several levels of problems, such as local issues of a specific crop, regional issues integrating nutrition with production policies or global

problems addressing population, wealth, and food. Models described in this study have potential for analyzing many policy-related matters for food and agricultural decision-makers. However, these models are only partial representations of reality based on certain assumptions of their designers.

THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM--OVERISSUED BENEFITS NOT RECOVERED AND FRAUD NOT PUNISHED. CED-77-112, July 18, 1977.

The Government is losing over half a billion dollars annually because of overissued food stamp benefits caused by errors, misrepresentations, suspected fraud by recipients, and by errors by local food stamp offices. For every \$100 of the more than \$5 billion in annual benefits issued nationally overissuances account for about \$12, only about 12 cents of that \$12 has been recovered. The 8 local projects GAO reviewed were doing little to identify and recover the value of these overissuances. At five of the eight projects, about half of the dollar value of claims established for food stamp over-issuances were classified as involving suspected fraud by recipients, but very few recipients were prosecuted or otherwise penalized. The courts are already clogged with more serious criminal cases and most prosecutors are reluctant to prosecute suspected recipient fraud cases. If some semblance of integrity is to be maintained in this program, food stamp recipient fraud cannot be allowed to continue unchecked. Administrative adjudication and penalty assessment could be an effective deterrent. Also, better financial incentives are needed for States and local projects to devote more effort to identifying and recovering over-issuances and punishing recipient fraud.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM--IS IT WORKING? PAD-77-6, July 25, 1977.

This report identifies shortcomings in both the evaluation and performance of the School Lunch Program. It recommends specific actions for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of program services. Areas discussed include

- schoolchild health,
- children in need of nutrition,
- operating efficiency, and
- the relationship of the program to the Nation's agricultural economy.



SUMMARY OF A REPORT: THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM--IS IT WORKING? PAD-77-7, July 26, 1977.

This is summary of a report to the Congress (PAD-77-6) on the impact of the National School Lunch Program.

WATER RESOURCES PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT: WHAT ARE THE NATION'S WATER SUPPLY PROBLEMS AND ISSUES? CED-77-100, July 28, 1977.

The drought in the Midwest and Western States with its devastating impacts highlights the seriousness of the water problems facing the United States. Achieving solutions poses challenges for the establishment of priorities and responsive implementing programs. In this study, GAO identifies existing and emerging water supply difficulties which must be better understood to lead to timely considerations of ways to solve the key water problems.

LAND USE PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, AND CONTROL. CED-77-101, July 26, 1977. (staff study)

As part of it's continuing reassessment of areas of national concern and interest, and as an aid to focus its work efforts, GAO has attempted to identify problems and issues within the land use planning, management, and control area meriting attention. This study identifies and describes the problems and issues in the area and represents the perspectives GAO uses to organize its audit efforts.

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SHOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE FOR COTTON CLASSING AND TOBACCO GRADING SERVICES. CED-77-105, August 2, 1977.

The Congress should pass legislation authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to charge users for cotton classing and tobacco grading services. Except for cotton and tobacco producers, users of the Department of Agriculture's grading services have to pay all or at least a substantial part of the cost of these services. In fiscal year 1976, free cotton and tobacco services cost American taxpayers \$11.2 million. The reasons for placing these services on a free basis in the 1930's no longer apply. Providing these services free is inconsistent with the Government's general policy of charging fees for special services and with the practices of charging for grading other commodities.

MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH: NEED AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT. CED-77-121, August 23, 1977.

The extremely complex and highly diversified agricultural research system in the United States has made notable contributions to the Nation's well-being. However, there is an increasing realization that an up-to-date national plan needs to be developed and maintained if the system is to be responsive to future critical problems and needs and if limited public dollars are to be used wisely. The Agricultural Research Service, the largest organization in the Federal-State research system, could improve its research through better planning, project selection, and review of ongoing work.

SUPPLEMENT TO COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE CONGRESS, "THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM--OVERISSUED BENEFITS NOT RECOVERED AND FRAUD NOT PUNISHED" (CED-77-112 dated July 18, 1977). CED-77-112A, August 31, 1977.

This supplement to an earlier GAO report includes comments from the Department of Agriculture and GAO's response to those comments.

MORE AND BETTER USES COULD BE MADE OF BILLIONS OF GALLONS OF WATER BY IMPROVING IRRIGATION DELIVERY SYSTEMS. CED-77-117, September 2, 1977.

Billions of gallons of water seep from inefficient irrigation delivery systems in the western States. By reducing such seepage, more water could be available for crop irrigation, energy development, environment improvement, and recreation. No Federal agency has taken a leadership role in identifying all aspects of the problem or recommending a comprehensive action program. Because it accounts for about 90 percent of the Federal funds involved in projects that include irrigation delivery systems, the Department of the Interior should assume such a role.

STRONGER CONTROLS NEEDED OVER THE MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS ASSOCIATION PROGRAMS IN NORTH CAROLINA. HRD-77-84, September 8, 1977.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Association operates programs that provide employment and training services to

farmworkers in North Carolina. Most program goals were met, however, many job placements lasted only a short time. In addition, the association's administrative costs in 1975 exceeded the 20-percent limit imposed by Labor's regulations. Improvements are needed in the association's accounting and administrative controls to make sure that Federal funds are spent properly.

FOOD WASTE: AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE RESOURCE USE.  
CED-77-118, September 16, 1977.

About one-fifth of all food produced for human consumption is lost annually in the United States. In the world context of rising population, uncertain weather, and concern with the availability of resources, every opportunity should be taken to improve food system management in this country. More attention should be directed at the causes of food waste, new management technology for reducing loss, and improvement of consumer understanding.

FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION'S BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL LOAN PROGRAM CAN BE IMPROVED. CED-77-126, September 30, 1977.

Creation of job-producing businesses is the key to rural development. To this end, the business and industrial loan program of the Farmers Home Administration, Department of Agriculture, helps to save and create jobs in rural areas.

The agency could take a number of actions to

- more accurately report accomplishments so that the Congress can better determine the program's effectiveness,
- improve loan application assessments,
- provide better loan servicing, and
- increase guidance to borrowers.

Also, action could be taken to attain enough qualified staff.

THE U.S. GREAT LAKES COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY--PAST, PRESENT, AND POTENTIAL. CED-77-96, September 30, 1977.

Overfishing, predators (sea lamprey), contaminants and increasingly restrictive State regulations have reduced the U.S. Great Lakes commercial fishing industry to a mere shadow of its former prominence. At this time there is little chance that the number of commercial fishermen or the commercial harvest from the Great Lakes will increase. fish farming (aquaculture) is not considered a viable alternative to traditional fishing in Great Lakes waters. Knowledge from continued research on harvesting and using less desirable or low-value species may encourage commercial fishermen to expand their harvests. The future of Great Lakes commercial fishing depends on the extent to which the Great Lakes States want to develop and maintain a viable commercial fishery. Federal assistance geared to meet the requirements of State commercial fishery programs will help to improve the fishery.

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT OF 1976 AND 1977--EXTENT, DAMAGE, AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE. CED-77-137, October 19, 1977.

With the drought persisting through 1976 and 1977, surface water supplies in some parts of California dwindled sharply, and large quantities of groundwater were extracted to make up the shortage.

The drought did the most damage to California's agriculture, especially the livestock industry. Federal, State, and local government response has been generally adequate to cope with the drought.

Because of the potential, significant adverse effects of continued groundwater extraction without adequate replenishment, delays in completing water projects, and concerns for protecting and preserving water resources, it is questionable whether the water developments and proposals covered in the State water plan will meet projected water demands.

COFFEE: PRODUCTION AND MARKETING SYSTEMS. ID-77-54, October 28, 1977.

In July 1976, frost devastated Brazil's coffee trees. This reduced its coffee production the next year from 23 to 9.6 million bags. Later, other large coffee-producing countries experienced reduced production due to political and natural events.

After the frost, unprecedented coffee price increases raised the ire of U.S. consumers and added to U.S. balance-of-payments already heightened by the high costs of imported petroleum. The U.S. import price for coffee during 1977 may approach \$6.5 billion, almost two and one-half times greater than the \$2.7 billion for 1976.

POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF A NATIONAL MANDATORY DEPOSIT ON BEVERAGE CONTAINERS. PAD-78-19, December 7, 1977.

Refundable deposits on beverage containers--cans and bottles--would change the national beverage system from about 25-percent deposit containers to 100-percent deposit containers.

This four-fold increase in deposit coverage would reduce litter and solid waste. Other changes, such as on raw material use and energy, would depend on the extent to which refillable bottles replaced one-way bottles and cans.

Industry costs would definitely include extra effort for handling and storing the four-fold increase in deposit containers. Other costs, such as increased capital for filling lines and increased wages, would depend on the extent to which refillable bottles replaced one-way bottles and cans.

NATIONAL NUTRITION ISSUES. CED-78-7, December 8, 1977.

Over the past 10 years the Nation's concern for food has increasingly turned from more than that of basic supply to that of adequate nutrition. Inadequate nutrition has become more and more linked with this Nation's leading causes of death. As these links have been better defined it is apparent that adequate nutrition is an integral part of preventive disease protection.

The purpose of this staff study was to identify major issues relating to U.S. nutrition policy for both consideration by the Congress and future areas for study by GAO and other public and private institutions.

In carrying out the survey objectives, GAO reviewed the activities of the private, governmental, and academic sectors in the field of nutrition and obtained published articles, statements, or documents addressing the specific aspects of this topic. Selected nutritionists and Government officials were interviewed and presentations of nutrition issues from selected consultants were obtained.

A BETTER WAY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO INSPECT MEAT AND POULTRY PROCESSING PLANTS. CED-78-11, December 9, 1977.

Agriculture's services would be more efficient and effective if the frequency of inspections at meat and poultry processing plants was tailored to individual plants. Periodic unannounced inspections would allow Agriculture to inspect more plants or inspect more frequently those plants needing upgrading.

One requirement in any system of periodic unannounced inspections should be the in-plant quality control system. Effective quality-control operations better provide increased assurance to consumers that they are receiving wholesome, unadulterated products properly branded.

The Congress should authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to (1) make periodic unannounced inspections of meat and poultry processing plants, (2) require meat and poultry processing plants to develop and implement quality-control systems, and (3) impose strong penalties for plants failing to comply with inspection requirements.

CREDIT PROGRAMS FOR SMALL FARMERS IN LATIN AMERICA CAN BE IMPROVED. ID-77-1, December 9, 1977.

The Agency for International Development has improved its efforts to provide credit assistance to small farmers in Latin America. However, in some countries those groups to which credit may be made available are too broadly defined.

By refining target group definitions and criteria, the Agency can better meet its overall objective of assisting the poorer majorities through its usual practice of restricting credit to operators of small farms outside the scope of traditional banking systems.

THE FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE PROGRAM CAN BE MADE MORE EFFECTIVE FOD-77-7, December 13, 1977.

The Federal crop insurance program would provide little economic relief in the event of widespread crop failure.

The program is ineffective primarily because guarantees and premiums, set on a county or areawide basis, are excessive for some producers and too low for others.

GAO recommends that the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Federal Crop Insurance Corporation develop personalized rates and guarantees on the basis of individual producers' annual yield data for a successful crop insurance program.

U.S. PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.  
ID-77-55, January 27, 1978.

The importance of research to aid developing countries in meeting their food needs is being emphasized increasingly. Much attention has focused on the international agricultural research centers as a result of the development of high-yield varieties of rice and wheat which created the hope of a "Green Revolution."

The Agency for International Development is a major contributor to the international agricultural research centers and also supports agricultural research of benefit to developing countries through U.S. universities and other institutions.

This report examines the Agency's support of international agricultural research centers and its research strategy and makes recommendations for improving management of the program.

HOW GOOD ARE SCHOOL LUNCHES? CED-78-22, February 3, 1978.

The Department of Agriculture has specific food requirements for lunches served under the national school lunch program. Through these requirements, the Department seeks to provide students with lunches that, over time, contain one-third of the recommended daily dietary allowance of specified nutrients.

However, results of laboratory tests sponsored by GAO from Cleveland, Los Angeles, and New York showed that the Department's goal is not being met. Lunches in these cities were significantly short in as many as 8 of the 13 nutrients tested.

Separate tests in New York showed that at least 40 percent of the lunches did not meet the Department's requirements as to quantities served. Department officials acknowledged this as a nationwide problem. Microbiological tests sponsored by GAO showed that the lunches were safe to eat but that local testing varied considerably. Also, a lot of food was being thrown away because the students did not like it.

Improved meal standards and better monitoring of meal services are needed.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING INTERNAL AUDITING IN THE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. CED-78-28, February 9, 1978.

Requirements of Agriculture's Office of Audit have increased sharply in recent years without a corresponding increase in audit staff. Programs administered by State and local governments and educational institutions have not received enough audit coverage, including coverage by the States and other Federal agencies.

The Office of Audit has emphasized using advanced audit techniques to accomplish more and better audit coverage with existing staff and has tried, with only limited success until recently, to obtain additional staff. It has also undertaken several management improvement projects, although the lack of staff has delayed completion of some of these.

ACTIONS NEEDED TO IMPROVE THE NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE  
ELDERLY. HRD-78-58, February 23, 1978.

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, through the Older Americans Act, provides a vital need to older Americans--inexpensive and nutritionally sound meals and opportunities for socialization and recreation.

However, better data on program performance is needed and controls over meal contributions could be improved. Improvements are needed also to protect the confidentiality of participants' meal contributions and in allocating commodities to the projects.

FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION NEEDS TO BETTER PLAN, DIRECT,  
DEVELOP, AND CONTROL ITS COMPUTER-BASED UNIFIED MANAGEMENT  
INFORMATION SYSTEM. CED-78-68, February 27, 1978.

The Unified Management Information System is a computer-based information system under development by the Farmers Home Administration. This new system is designed to deliver better management information to all offices and levels within the agency. It is also intended to improve service to rural Americans seeking financial assistance. Recommendations made in this report will help the agency to more effectively

- schedule resources and completion dates,
- monitor life cycle costs for developing  
and operating the system,



- plan and develop the system consistent with user needs,
- develop test plans for the two system alternatives,
- evaluate the impact of organizational changes on the system, and
- exercise top management control.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF LOOPHOLE IN PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION ON SUGAR. B-118622, CED-78-85, March 14, 1978.

This review looked at the effect of the Presidential proclamation which was designed to protect the domestic price support loan program for sugar, noting that it did not impose fees on imported refined sugar.

INFORMING THE PUBLIC ABOUT NUTRITION: FEDERAL AGENCIES SHOULD DO BETTER. CED-78-75, March 22, 1978.

Nutrition education and the availability of reliable nutrition information is necessary for American consumers to make wise food choices and ultimately improve their quality of life.

There has been an overall lack of coordination both within and between the two Departments which are the primary sources of this information--the Departments of Agriculture and Health, Education, and Welfare. Neither has an effective method of screening material or knows how much money is spent in developing and disseminating nutrition information.

Only limited evaluation is conducted on the usefulness of the material and the effectiveness of the information. A central point for review of nutrition material should be established in each Department and a task force from the two Departments should consider specific problems identified in this report.

FEDERAL HUMAN NUTRITION RESEARCH NEEDS A COORDINATED APPROACH TO ADVANCE NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE. PSAD-77-156, March 28, 1978; PSAD-77-156A, March 28, 1978.

A report in two volumes on how the Federal Government spends from \$73 to \$117 million annually on human nutrition research. This is about 3 percent of the \$3 billion it spends annually on all agriculture and health research.

Several Federal departments and agencies support human nutrition research. However, comprehensive, consolidated information on Federal human nutrition research activities is limited and barriers to human nutrition research persist. Information needs to be developed concerning

- human nutrition requirements;
- food composition and nutrient biological availability;
- diet, disease causation, and food safety;
- food consumption and nutrition status.

THE SAHEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM--PROGRESS AND CONSTRAINTS. ID-78-18, March 29, 1978.

The great drought of 1968 to 1973 drew worldwide attention to longstanding problems of some of the most impoverished of the poor countries of the world--in the Sahel region of Africa. Through a coordinated forum called the Club du Sahel, these countries, supported by western nations and organizations, have made strides toward developing strategy and plans for achieving food self-sufficiency and economic growth in 20 to 30 years.

The United States participates in the Sahel development program. This is to have \$1 billion a year concentrated on such areas as agriculture and livestock. Many problems remain concerning how external aid can best be used to overcome Sahel development problems.

THE SUMMER FEEDING PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN: REFORMS BEGUN--MANY URGENTLY NEEDED. CED-78-90, March 31, 1978.

The summer feeding program for children, administered by the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service and the States, has a long history of problems such as fraudulent

bidding and contracting, lunches thrown away, spoiled or otherwise unsatisfactory food, meals given to adults, and excessive reimbursement claims.

The Senate Subcommittee on Nutrition asked GAO to review the 1977 program. Serious problems were still present but there was no evidence of many abuses which occurred in previous years.

The Congress and Agriculture should give specific attention to the legislative ceiling on State administrative funds and to factors which encourage some sponsors to overstate their reimbursement claims. Program administration should be improved in several areas.

CROP FORECASTING BY SATELLITE: PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS.  
PSAD-78-52, April 7, 1978.

The Department of Agriculture, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and NASA are trying to improve forecasts of foreign wheat production by using Landsat satellite imagery and weather data.

This Large Area Crop Inventory Experiment (LACIE), the most significant single effort under way to demonstrate a useful and cost-effective application for Landsat data, will end in July 1978. Agriculture then plans a new joint research effort reducing wheat and expanding LACIE techniques to other crops and applications.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: SANITARY CONDITIONS IN SELECTED FOOD INDUSTRIES. HRD-79-32, B-164031(2), April 11, 1978.

The Sanitary Conditions in Selected Food Industries was a followup to several of our reports.

Our work was done at the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) Boston and headquarters offices.

On the basis of our survey, we believe that:

- FDA's current strategy for inspecting food manufacturing plants has resulted in improved surveillance of food manufacturing firms.
- Sanitary conditions in the shellfish manufacturing industry have not improved appreciably.

--Although FDA officials believe sanitary conditions of restaurants may be improving, FDA has little evidence to support this contention.

THE STATISTICAL REPORTING SERVICE'S CROP REPORTS COULD BE OF MORE USE TO FARMERS. GGD-78-29, April 13, 1978.

The Department of Agriculture's Statistical Reporting Service needs to do more

- to be sure that farmers receive Service reports directly,
- to improve its relationship with the farmers,
- to strengthen its internal review system for evaluating usefulness of data, and
- to improve its statistical procedures for developing forecasts and estimates.

The Bureau of the Census should no longer maintain its list of farm operators and use the list being developed by the Service.

AUDIT OF COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 1977 CED-78-91, April 14, 1978.

The Corporation reported a realized loss, reimbursable through appropriations, of \$824 million for fiscal year 1977--\$222 million more than that for fiscal year 1976. Also, it incurred costs of \$1.3 billion for special activities, mainly those under Public Law 480, financed through special appropriations and collections from other governments.

Because of the uniqueness and scope of the Corporation's operations, it was not practicable for GAO to perform all examination and verification steps necessary to reach an overall opinion on the accuracy and fairness of the Corporation's financial statements at September 30, 1977. However, the Corporation's accounting methods provided a satisfactory record of its financial transactions and its financial reporting system was adequate to supply the Corporation's management with information for conducting its affairs.

FOOD STAMP WORK REQUIREMENTS-INEFFECTIVE PAPERWORK OR EFFECTIVE TOOL? CED-78-60, April 24, 1978.

The work requirements of the food stamp program are intended to affect the program in two ways--by helping recipients find jobs so that they will no longer need assistance and by terminating benefits to those recipients who are able but not willing to work.

Unfortunately, those responsible for administering the requirements seem to regard them as administrative paperwork rather than as a tool for reducing the program's size. And the job search requirement in the recently enacted Food Stamp Act of 1977 probably will be regarded the same way unless the Departments of Agriculture and Labor make administrative changes discussed in this report.

The 1977 act also requires that the workfare concept, in which food stamp recipients will be required to work on public service jobs for the value of their benefits, be tested in 14 pilot projects. In considering the President's welfare reform proposal, the Congress should assess the results of the food stamp work requirements, including the 14 pilot projects.

PROBLEMS PERSIST IN THE PUERTO RICO FOOD STAMP PROGRAM, THE NATION'S LARGEST. CED-78-84, April 27, 1978.

Senator James B. Allen of Alabama requested that GAO review the operation of the Department of Agriculture's food stamp program in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The program began there in July 1974 and various management and computer problems have plagued it since.

The Department and the Commonwealth, long aware of these problems, have only recently taken some effective steps to resolve them but more must be done. This report contains recommendations for solving the program's management and computer deficiencies.

REDESIGNING SHIPPING CONTAINERS TO REDUCE FOOD COSTS. CED-78-81, April 28.

The Federal Government spent an estimated \$10.3 billion for food in fiscal year 1977. This amount can be reduced by using "modularization"--a system geometrically relating the size of food shipping containers to one another.

Benefits from this system have been realized in European countries, but little is being done within the United States. To encourage Government-industry awareness of this efficiency opportunity, GAO recommends that:

- The Department of Agriculture take the initiative in advancing understanding of modularization.
- The U.S. Metric Board consider modularization in any metrication actions to change package sizes in the food industry.
- The Congress include testimony on modularization efforts in any consideration of food marketing and prices.

EFFECTS OF TAX POLICIES ON LAND USE. CED-78-97, April 28, 1978.

This document presents an overview of public and private studies that have considered the potential effects of local, State, and Federal taxes on land use.

There has been increasing recognition that tax policies and practices can have a negative or positive effect on desired land use objectives and can become important tools in land use planning. The Federal Government has a special interest in such effects because it sponsors many programs and policies with land use implications, especially in housing and urban development.

FOOD: REPORTS, LEGISLATION AND INFORMATION SOURCES. (A GUIDE ISSUED BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL). CED-78-37, May 1978.

The Second in a planned series of topical digests. It cites and indexes over 500 recent (July 1973 through September 1977) documents. It includes General Accounting Office, Office of Technology Assessment and Congressional Research Service as well as congressional documents. In addition, there are recurring reports to the Congress, Federal program evaluation reports and Federal information sources and systems.

REGULATION OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES MARKETS WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. CED-78-110, May 17, 1978.

Although the Commodity Futures Trading Commission has made a significant beginning in extending Federal regulation to segments of the industry never before regulated, much remains to be done to fully implement the mandate and congressional intent of the 1974 act which created the Commission.

The Commission has been hampered by a variety of organizational and management problems and by weaknesses in planning which have prevented it from making optimal use of its resources. It has also had to contend with widespread fraud in commodity options trading.

To strengthen Federal regulation of the futures markets and to promote effective industry self-regulation, the Commission needs to correct weaknesses in contract market designations, rule enforcement review, abusive trading practices, registration, customer claims, and market surveillance.

AUDIT OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE RESTAURANTS REVOLVING FUND, OCTOBER 3, 1976, TO OCTOBER 1, 1977, ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL. GGD-78-68, May 31, 1978.

The United States Senate Restaurants Revolving Fund was audited for the period October 3, 1976, to October 1, 1977 in accordance with the Comptroller General's standards for auditing financial transactions, accounts, and reports of governmental activities. These standards include generally accepted auditing standards. Financial statements were prepared on the basis of the accounting records maintained on an accrual basis by the Senate Restaurants' accounting staff and do include the cost of equipment and furnishings acquired with appropriated funds. The statements were prepared on a basis consistent with that of the preceding period and present fairly the financial position of the Senate Restaurants Revolving Fund at October 1, 1977, and October 2, 1976, results of its operations and changes in its financial position for these periods.

AUDIT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RESTAURANT REVOLVING FUND, JULY 4, 1976, TO OCTOBER 8, 1977. GGD-78-65, June 9, 1978.

For the 15-month period ended October 8, 1977, the restaurant's net income was \$72,281, consisting of a net loss of \$38,603 during the 3-month transition period (July 4 to October 9, 1976) and net income of \$110,884 during Fiscal year FY 1977. The net income in FY 1976 was \$534. As a result of GAO's FY 1976 report, controls were improved over congressional and Members' restaurant cash receipts, and the use of the petty cash fund. However, improvement is still needed in cash deposit procedures and in analysis of tableware and kitchenware replacement expenses.

The financial statements present fairly the financial position of the revolving fund at October 8, 1977, and July 3, 1976, and the results of its operations and changes in its financial position for these periods.

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. FARMLAND--MUCH CONCERN, LITTLE DATA. CED-78-132, June 12, 1978.

Twenty-five States had laws that placed some constraints on foreign ownership of land; 25 States did not. In the aggregate, State laws do not significantly discourage foreign ownership.

Information indicates that at least 44,700 acres (0.3 percent) of total county farmland in 25 counties in 5 States GAO visited were owned by nonresident alien interests. Reliable data is difficult to obtain.

Current or planned Federal data collection efforts are not encouraging. Of the alternatives considered, GAO believes a Federal registration system, similar to the current resident alien registration system, may be the simplest and best means for obtaining nationwide data.

FEDERAL DOMESTIC FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS--A TIME FOR ASSESSMENT AND CHANGE. CED-78-113, June 13, 1978.

The Departments of Agriculture and Health, Education, and Welfare and the Community Services Administration administer 13 major programs that provide food or food-related assistance to many Americans costing several billion dollars annually. This has helped recipients achieve more adequate diets.



However, the piecemeal authorization and administration of these food programs, their rapid expansion over the last 10 years, and proposals for comprehensive welfare reform have created a need and an opportunity to examine the programs' overall effectiveness.

GAO's review shows benefit overlaps and gaps, eligibility differences, administrative inconsistencies, coordination problems, and insufficient nationwide data on program benefits and nutritional impact.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: JOINT PROPOSAL FOR A NUTRITION SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM. CED-78-144, CED-78-145; B-133192; B-164031(3), June 29, 1978.

The Department of Agriculture and Health, Education, and Welfare recently developed a proposal for a comprehensive nutritional status monitoring system to determine (1) nutritional and dietary status of Americans, (2) nutritional quality of foods, (3) dietary practices and knowledge, and (4) the impact of nutrition intervention program. GAO found this proposal to be a good first step in establishing a nutritional surveillance system. There were, however, four areas of concern with the proposal (1) lack of specificity and agreement between HEW and USDA on key areas of the proposal, (2) lack of agreement on the collaborative, decennial survey, (3) role of the system in program evaluation, and (4) inadequacy of the coordination mechanism.

IMPROVED PROJECT AUTHORIZATIONS AND AGENCY PRACTICES CAN INCREASE CONGRESSIONAL CONTROL OF WATER RESOURCES PROJECTS. CED-78-123, July 11, 1978.

The Congress could increase its control over the development and funding of water resources projects by incorporating both a two-phase authorization and an authorization ceiling for all major projects.

These controls would increase the authorization committees' opportunities to evaluate and review project planning and construction without impeding project progress.

In addition, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers need to improve the accuracy and reliability of authorization ceiling and project cost information provided to the Congress.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S BEEF GRADING: ACCURACY AND UNIFORMITY NEED TO BE IMPROVED. CED-78-141, July 21, 1978.

The Department of Agriculture's beef grading program serves as a basis for price quotations among feeders, packers, suppliers, retailers, and others along the market chain. GAO found that grading was not always accurate or consistent from one section of the country to another.

The Department needs to

- increase research efforts to develop instruments to accurately measure beef carcass characteristics,
- establish a grading accuracy standard,
- improve its management of the program, and
- resolve questions about the adequacy and usefulness of the current beef grade standards.

AN OVERVIEW OF BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS FOR WATER RESOURCES PROJECTS-IMPROVEMENTS STILL NEEDED. CED-78-127, August 7, 1978.

Despite a continuing awareness of the need to improve benefit-cost analysis for making decisions on water resources projects costing billions of dollars, Federal agencies still have problems preparing accurate, uniform, logically developed benefit-cost ratios.

The water resources agencies should work together through the Water Resources Council to establish more specific criteria regarding the value and acceptability of benefits, develop more detailed procedures, and strengthen their reviews to insure correctly prepared benefit-cost analysis.

GAO suggests several organization alternatives to achieve more objective and reliable benefit-cost analysis.

SURVEY OF FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION'S EMERGENCY DISASTER AND EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK CREDIT PROGRAMS. CED-78-178; B-114873, August 18, 1978.

This program helped eligible farmers and ranchers continue operations after physical disasters and during adverse economic conditions; however, FmHA needs to make the program more equitable and efficient.

The program would provide greater benefits to borrowers if more care were exercised in tailoring loan payments to borrowers' long-term financial situations.

WHAT CAUSES FOOD PRICES TO RISE? WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?  
CED-78-170, September 8, 1978.

The primary causes of food price rises in this decade have been agricultural commodity shortages caused by bad weather and increased food marketing cost--especially labor cost--spurred by inflation. Food prices don't always fall when farm prices fall for a number of reasons. But a lack of specific and timely data makes it difficult to determine the reasons why. Improvements could be made in the Government's and food industry's roles in the food system which would lower food price levels or slow the rate of price increases. And the Government, when deciding on the need for additional legislation to protect the consumer or improve the environment or working conditions, should consider its effects on food prices.

GAO is recommending actions by the Congress and a number of Government organizations aimed at reducing food marketing costs, improving efficiency, stabilizing food prices, and improving food price statistics.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ACTIVITIES REGARDING FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN U.S. FARMLAND. CED-78-173; B-114824, September 15, 1978.

Within Commerce, the Office of Foreign Investment in the United States and the Bureau of Economic Analysis are responsible for collecting and analyzing foreign investment data.

The Office of Foreign Investment officials interpret their responsibility under the executive order to include monitoring of foreign investments in all sectors of the economy and undertaking special research projects.

According to Bureau officials, foreign ownership of U.S. land is not easily identified because of the lack of publicity surrounding these purchases, and coverage in this area will remain a problem.

NO-YEAR APPROPRIATIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.  
PAD-78-74, September 19, 1978.

Unobligated balances of budget authority in the Department of Agriculture increased from \$.32 billion in fiscal year 1973 to \$13.8 billion in fiscal year 1976 and dropped back to \$7.1 billion in 1977. Analysis of 25 selected no-year appropriation accounts (those which remain available for obligation for an indefinite period) disclosed substantial variances between estimated and actual balances of unobligated budget authority.

Reprogrammings and transfers of unobligated balances have given the Department flexibility to use funds not needed in certain programs to meet unanticipated increases in others without having to request additional funds. About \$346 million of unobligated balances have been reprogrammed or transferred within the Food and Nutrition Service and Soil Conservation Service since fiscal year 1976.

No-year appropriations generally should not be used to fund a department's programs unless there is a compelling reason to do so, such as a long-term contractual commitment. GAO concluded that only 10 of 25 Department of Agriculture no-year appropriation accounts met the basic criteria of the use of such funding.

SEWAGE SLUDGE--HOW DO WE COPE WITH IT? CED-78-152,  
September 25, 1978.

Coping with rapidly increasing volumes of sewage sludge, a potentially toxic substance, is a nationwide problem. Some disposal methods are being phased out, and others are being increasingly restricted by governmental actions.

To compound the problem, the lack of scientific data on environmental and health effects of sludge disposal, unproven technology, and high costs have hampered development and implementation of new techniques which could use sludge beneficially.

BEEF MARKETING: ISSUES AND CONCERNS. CED-78-153,  
September 26, 1978.

Recent rises in the price of beef--to record levels--have been of significant concern to American consumers, as beef is a consumer diet mainstay, a chief source of protein, and constitutes a major portion of the food budget.

This study briefly describes the beef marketing system and calls attention to some of the more important matters which affect the system and beef prices. GAO also raises a number of questions for those concerned with the efficient operation of the beef industry and the price of beef.

The main issues discussed are: increasing marketing concentration and power by industry middlemen, potential for price manipulation, beef safety and quality, processing and merchandising trends, imports and exports, futures trading, and beef transportation.

CHANGING CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE:  
AN OVERVIEW. CED-78-178, September 26, 1978.

Farms in the United States are getting fewer but larger, more specialized, and more dependent on purchases of supplies, equipment and technologies, and foreign markets.

Reduction in the number of farms and concentration on sales in the largest farms may reduce the resiliency of the farm structure to be able to deal with variations in commodity prices caused by unpredictable changes in the world economy.

This study discusses the importance of agriculture and its changing character and structure and presents a series of issues which warrant attention by the Congress and others responsible for the viability of the American farm sector.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY'S FOOD IRRADIATION PROGRAM-IS  
IT WORTH CONTINUING. PSAD-78-146, September 29, 1978.

In the last 25 years the Department of Defense has spent \$51 million on food irradiation research. The Army's food irradiation program is directed at using high doses of radiation to sterilize meats for use in military rations.

Despite the years of research, the Army has not yet convinced the Food and Drug Administration that irradiated meats are safe and nutritious. Legal, scientific, and economic barriers must be dealt with before radiation sterilized meats can be used in military rations.

BETTER WATER MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION POSSIBLE-BUT CONSTRAINTS NEED TO BE OVERCOME. CED-79-1, October 31, 1978.

The Bureau of Reclamation should examine water banking (a temporary transfer of water rights) and two other potential solutions for achieving better water management and conservation. Reclamation studies have not resulted in improvements nor do they deal with constraints. GAO recommendations should help Reclamation put the President's water policy initiatives into action.

REVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S JUNE 6, 1978, WATER POLICY MESSAGE. CED-79-2, November 6, 1978.

The President's water policy is a positive attempt to reform existing water resources development practices.

Proposals involve Federal programs, water conservation, Federal/State cooperation in water management, and environmental protection. Reforms in these areas are necessary but some do not go far enough while other areas needing reform were not considered.

The Senate Committee on the Budget requested that GAO review the President's message.

FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL NUTRITION INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM. CED-79-5, November 7, 1978.

A properly designed and coordinated system can supply the nutrition intelligence needed to support Federal programs to achieve nutrition. The United States presently does not have such a system but some of the information is supplied by activities conducted by the Departments of Agriculture and Health, Education, and Welfare.

Weaknesses in existing activities include data which is often untimely, not sufficiently specific geographically, omits important population groups, and is inadequate for evaluating program effectiveness. Further, existing activities are fragmented among several agencies and not integrated into a coordinated system. This report describes recommendations GAO recently made to the Congress and Federal Departments for more effective nutrition intelligence but much work remains to be done.

THE PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL'S ROLE IN SALMON FISHERIES. CED-79-4, November 9, 1978.

In response to a request from Senator Bob Packerwood, GAO compiled information on the Pacific Fishery Management Council's policies as they relate to the goals outlined in the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976.

Various fishing interests question the adequacy of the data the council uses to support decisions in its ocean salmon fishery management plans. Council members generally believed that current scientific data supports their plans. GAO found that decisionmaking data is limited and, although available evidence generally supports council decisions, improved data bases are needed.

Several research studies are underway to provide additional information for developing a comprehensive salmon plan for the 1980 fishing season.

LAND USE ISSUES. CED-79-15, November 16, 1978.

This study examines current and emerging issues relating to Federal involvement in the land use planning, management, and control.

In recent years, an awareness that land and its resources are limited and subject to deterioration has led to a growing concern over how land is being used and how it should be used.

The Federal Government owns large amounts of land and resources and sponsors many programs with land use implications.

RESERVED WATER RIGHTS FOR FEDERAL AND INDIAN RESERVATIONS:  
A GROWING CONTROVERSY IN NEED OF RESOLUTION. CED-78-176,  
November 16, 1978.

Undetermined Federal and Indian reserved water rights in the Western States are causing great uncertainties about existing water uses and for potential water users. This report discusses the origin and nature of reserved water rights, the controversial questions and issues surrounding them, and proposals suggested for resolving them.

There is an urgent need to settle the problem because the controversy is becoming more acute as new and existing water uses place greater demands on the limited water supply in the Western States. This report endorses the President's recently announced water policy which directs the Federal agencies to resolve the reserved water rights issues.

RECOMMENDED DIETARY ALLOWANCES: MORE RESEARCH AND BETTER  
FOOD GUIDES NEEDED. B-165031(3), CED-78-169, November 30,  
1978.

Recommended dietary allowances are guidelines for nutrient intakes to ensure a healthy population. The allowances are adequate for the intended purpose of serving as guidelines for use by nutrition professionals. However, they do not address some current concerns on diet and health. More research and a better translation of the allowances into food guides for the consumer is needed.

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLANNING IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE AND  
MAY NOT BE EFFECTIVE FOR MANY YEARS. CED-78-168,  
December 11, 1978.

Water quality management planning probably will not be effective for many years until

- cause and effect water quality data is obtained,
- planning efforts become more comprehensive, and
- public participation strategies, are broadened.



Unless good cause and effect data is obtained to clearly support implementation actions needed, implementation of plans developed by planning agencies risks legal action and rejection. The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed, and GAO agrees that potential solutions to water quality problems should be tested in selected river basins before being applied on a nationwide basis.

This review was undertaken at the request of the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Investigations and Review, House Committee on Public Works and Transportation.

PROPOSED CHANGES IN MEAT AND POULTRY NET WEIGHT LABELING REGULATIONS BASED ON INSUFFICIENT DATA. CED-79-28, December 20, 1978.

Although the Department of Agriculture has proposed changes in its net weight labeling regulations for meat and poultry products, it has not obtained sufficient data to

- support the need for changing the regulations,
- decide how to deal with moisture loss after a product has been packaged and shipped,
- consider the economic impact of the proposed changes, and
- comparatively evaluate the alternative net weight compliance systems.

The Department should expand and extend its search for information concerning the best way to monitor net weight labeling for meat and poultry products.

FORMULATED GRAIN-FRUIT PRODUCTS: PROPOSED RESTRICTIONS ON USE IN SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM SHOULD BE REEVALUATED. CED-79-12, December 26, 1978.

The Department of Agriculture has proposed to prohibit using the two-component meal of formulated grain-fruit products (forfeited pastries) and milk in the school breakfast program. Although grain-fruit products are not used widely or frequently, some schools find them to be popular, convenient, and less costly. Also, they often contain more nutrients than the foods that would replace them.

Agriculture wants to ban the two-component breakfast because many nutritionists believe it has too much sugar and fat, may lack trace elements and other unknown nutrients, and may teach poor eating habits. Little substantive information is available on these issues. Further, these same criticisms also could apply to other breakfasts which would still be allowed in the program.

GAO believes the Department should consider available alternatives, such as revising its grain-fruit product specifications and limiting the frequency with which the two-component breakfast may be served. More importantly, Agriculture should take the lead in getting research performed to provide needed information on these issues and should apply pertinent research findings broadly to the foods used in school feeding programs.

REGULATION OF RETAILERS AUTHORIZED TO ACCEPT FOOD STAMPS SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED. CED-78-183, December 28, 1978.

The Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service has unnecessarily authorized some retailers to accept food stamps even though they sold only token amounts of staple foods. This weakens the primary control for channeling food stamp use to staple food needed for an economical nutritious diet and seems inconsistent with the legislation requiring that only retailers advancing program objectives be authorized. Agriculture believes that the Food Stamp Act of 1977 will result in improvements in this regard.

Food Stamp redemption controls need strengthening. Data the Service uses for routinely monitoring 270,000 retailers is unreliable, and independent controls to make sure that commercial banks are accepting food stamps only as permitted do not exist.

The Department has been unable to adequately identify, and impose timely and effective penalties against, retailers not adhering to the law and program regulations.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: LIMITATIONS ON PAYMENTS TO FARMERS.  
CED-79-31, January 4, 1979.

GAO reviewed the administration of the payment limitation program to determine if Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) procedures and controls were adequate to insure compliance with the limitation. ASCS needs to

- take steps to insure that county offices obtain the necessary information on all program participants and properly combine farming entities for payment limitation purposes;
- insure that ASCS headquarters and State offices review the required number of county office determinations; and
- revise instructions to (1) clearly define the types of payment limitation determinations to be submitted for review and (2) require county offices to obtain legal documents before making determinations involving legal entities.

PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT UNDER THE FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT. CED-79-23,  
January 9, 1979.

In response to a joint request from the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries and its Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment, GAO assessed progress and problems in fisheries management under the Fishery Conservation and Management Act, emphasizing the activities of the regional fisheries management councils.

The report addresses the progress made and the problems encountered in carrying out the act and contains detailed information on the activities of each of the five councils GAO reviewed.

The report includes recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: USE OF NUTRITION SUPPLEMENTS IN CANCER TREATMENT. HRD-79-46, January 22, 1979.

Medical personnel GAO contacted generally believe that some groups of cancer patients have serious nutritional deficiencies.

cies and that nutritional supplementation may be an important adjunct to their treatment. Some preliminary research results indicate that nutritional supplementation may have benefited certain cancer patients. However, great uncertainty exists about the extent of benefits nutritional supplementation has to cancer patients.

FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND NUTRITION ISSUES FOR PLANNING.  
CED-79-36, January 29, 1979.

During this decade the importance of our food system has been amply demonstrated. We have experienced both an oversupply of agriculture commodities and a depletion of worldwide food reserves. The consumer has been rediscovered and concern with the American peoples' health and security has focused attention on food prices, food quality, and nutritional impact. The Federal Government is intimately involved in the food system through its regulation, surveillance, oversight, price support, and assistance activities.

This study examines the current and emerging issues relating to Federal involvement in the food, agriculture, and nutrition area and represents the perspective used in organizing GAO audit efforts.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION'S COMMODITY LOAN AND GRAIN RESERVE PROGRAM.  
January 29, 1979.

GAO discussed with ASCS headquarters officials the need for some improvements in (1) the methods followed by county commodity inspectors in taking grain measurements which, along with the test weight, are used as a basis for determining loan amounts under both programs and storage payments under the reserve program and (2) identifying storage facilities containing CCC's loan collateral.

Improvements are needed to establish uniformity in the methods followed by commodity inspectors in measuring grain and to make sure that CCC's collateral is adequately identified.

ASCS headquarters officials, agreed that procedures should be developed showing how grain measurements are to be taken, that storage facilities containing CCC's collateral should be better identified, and that an exterior identification would help to facilitate the inspector's work. They indi-

cated that identification has been a problem over the years and that a more durable seal should be looked into.

FEDERAL RESPONSE TO THE 1976-77 DROUGHT: WHAT SHOULD BE DONE NEXT? CED-79-26, January 31, 1979.

Four Federal agencies provided drought-related loans and grants exceeding \$1 billion to augment water supplies and provided assistance to a large number of drought victims. However, there were problems in administering the drought programs.

To cope more effectively with future droughts, the Congress should direct the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Interior and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to assess the problems encountered in providing emergency relief during the 1976-77 drought. Based on the results of this assessment--which would build on GAO's work--a national plan should be developed for providing future assistance in a more timely, consistent, and equitable manner.

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN ITS MANAGEMENT OF STUDY, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES. ID-79-13, February 12, 1979.

AID needs better cost information and stronger management control over studies, research, and evaluation. It does not

- give adequate consideration to information already available before contracting for more studies and research,
- assure itself that it has received the product which it contracted to buy, and
- disseminate this information effectively to others.

FOOD SALVAGE INDUSTRY SHOULD BE PREVENTED FROM SELLING UNFIT AND MISBRANDED FOOD TO THE PUBLIC. HRD-79-32, February 14, 1979.

Potentially adulterated food in dirty, rusted, swollen, and severely dented cans or torn packages is being sold to the public and to health care facilities. Product labels are often missing or incomplete.

These conditions in the food salvage industry are the same as those GAO reported in 1975.

For the most part, recommendations made in GAO's earlier report have not been carried out. The Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture believe that regulation of this industry is a relatively low priority because there is not a significant health risk to consumers of salvaged food products.

SUGAR AND OTHER SWEETENERS: AN INDUSTRY ASSESSMENT.  
CED-79-21, February 26, 1979.

This report describes the principal elements of the U.S. sugar industry, the corn sweetener industry, the sugar industries of major U.S. trading partners, and the International Sugar Agreement. It also discusses some of the issues involved in developing sugar legislation.

GAO is recommending that the Congress enact comprehensive sugar legislation and direct the Secretary of Agriculture to obtain needed information on sugar and corn sweeteners.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: FUTURE ROLE IN THE MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION IS UNCLEAR. CED-79-46, February 26, 1979.

GAO reviewed the functions, activities, and utility of the three interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions in light of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 which established the Regional Fishery Management Councils.

To date, the functions and the activities of the commissions have not substantially changed since passage of the act. Generally, the commissions have and currently are providing services and assistance to the member States. State officials, for the most part, support a continuing role for the commissions on matters not subject to the councils' jurisdiction.

GAO believes that the current reassessments by the commissions should be very useful in helping to determine and establish the ultimate role and functions of the commissions in fishery issues.

THE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS,  
AND CHILDREN (WIC)--HOW CAN IT WORK BETTER? CED-79-55,  
February 27, 1979.

Many local WIC programs provided needed health services and operated as adjuncts to good health care as the Congress intended, but for others this was not the case. Stronger legislative requirements and better administration are needed to remedy this and to prevent further difficulties in providing needed health services as the WIC program continues its rapid expansion. In addition,

- required professional assessments of applicants' nutritional status were not being made in some locations;
- States used different criteria for judging whether applicants were nutritional risks and eligible for the program;
- supplemental food packages seldom were tailored to participants' individual nutritional needs;
- nutrition education and program evaluation have not received the priority and attention they deserve; and
- program regulations contain provisions hindering effective evaluations.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ISSUES FACING THE NATION.  
CED-79-63, March 15, 1979.

In recent years the need to protect human health and the environment from pollution has become clearly evident. The Federal Government has responded by enacting far-reaching legislation which could cost an estimated half a trillion dollars over the next decade. Questions have been raised on whether the environmental goals are too costly to achieve or whether the right balance has been struck between environmental objectives and energy, economic and social goals.

This study examines current and emerging issues relating to Federal involvement in the environmental protection area and represents the perspective used in organizing GAO audit efforts.

QUESTIONABLE PAYMENTS AND LOAN DEFAULTS IN SUGAR PROGRAMS.  
CED-79-24, March 16, 1979.

The Department of Agriculture's price-support payment program on 1977 crop year sugar has resulted in questionable payments in the millions.

The program is beset with problems of storage, underpayments to growers, and failure to verify or enforce minimum wage regulations.

Substantial defaults on Government loans are occurring as a result of low-cost sugar imports, but no final plans have been made to dispose of the sugar forfeited to the Government as collateral.

The Congress should enact legislation to permit sugar workers to benefit from payment programs and provide guidance on any future program implementation.

GRAIN DUST EXPLOSIONS--AN UNSOLVED PROBLEM. HRD-79-1,  
March 21, 1979.

Deaths and injuries from grain dust explosions have increased since 1975, and specific causes of most of them are not known. The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration did not determine the causes of explosions it investigated, and GAO concluded that it should make a greater effort to do so.

The report shows the compliance with existing safety standards may not be enough to prevent the disasters. The adequacy of Labor's standards and the numerous proposals for reducing grain dust explosions needed a thorough evaluation.

U.S. DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO THE SAHEL--PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS. ID-79-9, March 29, 1979.

The United States has increased its assistance and upgraded its missions in the drought stricken and impoverished countries of Central and West Africa--the Sahel.

Progress has been made. AID should

--guard against the commitment of too much financial help too soon, considering the factors inhibiting effective use of assistance;



- improve its design performance and emphasize project implementation; and
- make more effective use of provided food assistance.

Both AID and Peace Corps need to work more closely to improve their respective programs.

EFFORTS TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF U.S. FOREIGN AID--CHANGES MADE AND CHANGES NEEDED. ID-79-14, March 29, 1979.

Over the past 5 years, GAO and others have made a number of recommendations to improve those U.S. programs aimed at bettering the way of life in less developed countries. This followup report shows that AID has taken steps to improve program management but needs to do more in several areas.

THE FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT'S IMPACT ON SELECTED FISHERIES. CED-79-57, April 3, 1979.

In response to a joint request from the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries and its Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment, GAO assessed the impact of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act on selected fisheries. This report addresses the Committee's specific questions and provides detailed information on three selected fisheries--Gulf shrimp, New England groundfish, and Alaskan crab.

WATER RESOURCES AND THE NATION'S WATER SUPPLY. CED-79-69, April 13, 1979.

The Nation's growing population and industrial development are placing new demands on water resources. Shortages and competition for the limited supplies are developing.

Ways must be found to augment this study and achieve the greatest use from existing resources.

PROBLEMS IN PREVENTING THE MARKETING OF RAW MEAT AND POULTRY CONTAINING POTENTIALLY HARMFUL RESIDUES. HRD-79-10, April 17, 1979.

GAO estimates that 14 percent by dressed weight of the meat and poultry sampled by the Department of Agriculture between 1974 and 1976 contained illegal and potentially harmful residues of animal drugs, pesticides, or environmental contaminants. Many of these substances are known to cause or are suspected of causing cancer, birth defects, or other toxic effects.

Actions taken by the Food and Drug Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and Department of Agriculture to protect consumers from illegal and potentially harmful residues have not been effective because:

- The extent of public exposure to illegal residues has not been accurately estimated.
- Contaminated meat and poultry are generally marketed before the violation is discovered and some cannot be recalled.
- Efforts to prevent future shipments of meat and poultry containing illegal residues have been inadequate.

LONG-TERM COST IMPLICATIONS OF FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION SUBSIDIZED AND GUARANTEED LOAN PROGRAM. PAD-79-15, April 24, 1979.

The Farmers Home Administration provides loans for rural housing, farming, and community and industrial development. In fiscal year 1979 the authorization request exceeded \$7 billion, but the agency does not identify the future financial obligations that are incurred by the annual authorization for each loan program or for all programs.

Each program, serving different areas of the rural community, has unique characteristics that directly affect its cost. This report discusses the nature and operation of each program and develops a way to estimate long-term costs.

COLOCATING AGRICULTURE FIELD OFFICES--MORE CAN BE DONE.  
CED-79-74, April 25, 1979.

Since 1962 the Department of Agriculture has had a colocation program providing that its agencies' field offices in the same community be located together in the same building. Although progress has been made, there is substantial potential for additional colocation of Agriculture field offices.

The Secretary of Agriculture and the Administrator, General Services Administration, should take action to increase colocation efforts and resolve conflicts between the two agencies concerning field office locations.

WAYS TO RESOLVE CRITICAL WATER RESOURCES ISSUES FACING THE NATION. CED-79-87, April 27, 1979.

In this report GAO discusses ways to deal with problems in

- authorizing and appropriating funds for water resources projects,
- making benefit/cost analysis more reliable,
- promoting better water management and conservation,
- managing ground water supplies,
- developing a national dam safety program,
- resolving urban water supply issues, and
- reevaluating the 160-acre limitation on land eligible to receive water from Federal projects.

This report was prepared at the request of Senator Pete V. Domenici, Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Water Resources, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

DESALTING WATER PROBABLY WILL NOT SOLVE THE NATION'S WATER PROBLEMS, BUT CAN HELP. CED-79-60, May 1, 1979.

Because of increased contamination of surface and ground water, the lack of freshwater is rapidly becoming a problem for many locations in the Nation. Desalting of water is a possible solution. This report discusses the need for the Office of Water Research and Technology to develop and

implement a comprehensive, well defined saline water conversion program plan aimed at achieving a practical, low cost desalting method.

GAO recommends that the Secretary of the Interior present this plan to the Congress and also take actions to effectively implement it.

AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE CORPORATION FISCAL YEAR 1978. CED-79-72, May 31, 1979.

The Corporation reported an operating loss of \$78.2 million for fiscal year 1978, due primarily to drought conditions affecting the corn, tobacco, and wheat crops.

At September 30, 1978, the Corporation had a deficit of \$152.4 million leaving \$476 million from the \$200 million capital the Treasury invested. Preliminary estimates indicate that premiums in fiscal year 1979 will exceed indemnities by about \$43.2 million, reversing the trend of the last 3 years. The Corporation is a part of the Department of Agriculture.

BETTER REGULATION OF PESTICIDE EXPORTS AND PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN IMPORTED FOOD IS ESSENTIAL. CED-79-43, June 22, 1979.

Hazardous pesticides suspended, canceled, or never registered for use in the United States are exported routinely. Serious injuries have occurred from their use in other countries. In many cases the Environmental Protection Agency has neither informed other governments of pesticide suspension, cancellations, and restrictions in the U.S. nor revoked tolerances for residues of these pesticides on imported foods.

The Food and Drug Administration does not analyze imported food for many potential residues. It allows food to be marketed before testing it for illegal residues and importers are not penalized if their imports later are determined to contain them. The safety and appropriateness of some residues allowed on imported food has not been determined.

COMPUTATION OF AVERAGE MARKET PRICE OF RICE QUESTIONED--  
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND UNIMPEDED GAO ACCESS TO RECORDS  
NEEDED. CED-79-85, June 25, 1979.

The Department of Agriculture omitted the cost of drying green rice in determining the average price farmers receive for their rice. This caused deficiency payments to be about \$10.6 million more than they otherwise would have been for the 1976 crop and \$5 million more for the 1978 crop.

Agriculture's statistics agency revised its original computation on the average price for the 1978 crop after GAO questioned it. This resulted in an \$11-million savings.

This report discusses problems GAO has in gaining access to rice program records and Agriculture's agreement to obtain an independent review of the agency's statistics operations.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: U.S. IMPACT ON SUGAR. ID-79-43,  
July 17, 1979.

In 1977 the Government filed an antitrust suit against the New York Coffee and Sugar Exchange, Inc., alleging that its method for determining the price for raw sugar was illegal. A proposed system, although not an exact measure of world prices, will eliminate objectionable practices used by the Exchange. It will be a new method for determining the import fee.

FAMILY FARMERS NEED COOPERATIVES--BUT SOME ISSUES NEED TO BE  
RESOLVED. CED-79-106, July 26, 1979.

The Nation's family farmers need the right to act together through cooperatives if many are to survive in agriculture. However, the Department of Agriculture needs to establish an enforcement and monitoring system to ensure that cooperatives do not use monopolistic or other unfair trade practices to raise prices unduly, as critics have charged.

The Congress needs to decide whether it is in the Nation's best interest to allow nonfamily farm corporations to continue to be cooperative members.

Many cooperatives need to adopt equity redemption programs that are fair to both current and former members.

GAO found cooperative officials generally satisfied with the quality and quantity of technical and educational assistance available from the Department of Agriculture.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN U.S. AGRICULTURE LAND--HOW IT SHAPES UP. CED-79-114, July 30, 1979.

This report, requested by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, provides an indepth perspective on foreign investment in U.S. agricultural land. Foreign buyers from at least 30 countries bought about 8 percent (248,146 acres) of the 3 million acres of agricultural land that changed hands in a sample of 148 counties in 10 States during 18 months ended June 30, 1978. Foreign buyers bought relatively large acreages in some counties. Projecting purchase data statewide showed that 13.2 million acres changed hands in the 10 States, including 514,760 foreign-bought acres (4 percent).

Most foreign-bought land went to Western Europeans--GAO did not find Arab investors to be a factor. The land was bought primarily for investment security and capital preservation and appreciation; most has continued in its same use; and some property improvements have been made. Available information indicates that foreign buyers did not consistently pay more than U.S. buyers for similar land.

GAO believes the foreign investment situation bears watching--through the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978--and that eliminating the tax advantage available to foreign, but not U.S., investors in U.S. land would be beneficial.

Local U.S. individuals bought the most land in the review counties, but nonlocal U.S. and foreign businesses bought a sizable portion--24 percent. GAO believes this also bears watching--by the Department of Agriculture--because it could further erode the U.S. family farm structure.

AGRICULTURE WEATHER INFORMATION IS NOT EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATED TO USERS. CED-79-110, August 7, 1979.

The Agricultural Weather Service Program is not being communicated effectively to users and potential users; and the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture program roles, responsibilities, and goals for providing this service are not clear.

These departments should improve the methods and procedures for publicizing and communicating weather information to users and potential users and provide program coordination by updating the Federal Plan for a National Agricultural Weather Service.

EFFECT OF LABOR DEPARTMENT'S RESOURCE ALLOCATION FORMULA ON EFFORTS TO PLACE FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS IN JOBS. CED-79-79, August 15, 1979.

Labor has used its formula to allocate about one-third of the \$1 billion in Federal funds provided to State employment service agencies annually. A new allocation system will be used in fiscal year 1980.

The formula's effect on State agencies' efforts to place food stamp recipients in jobs is not clear. However, several factors, including no explicit incentive for placing these recipients, could discourage such efforts. The Congress and the executive branch will need to decide on a special preference for food stamp recipients.

Labor gets \$28 million a year from the Department of Agriculture for food stamp work registration activities, but the services these funds are to cover are not clearly defined. The Office of Management and Budget should help clarify this matter.

This report is a supplement to GAO's 1978 report on food stamp work requirements. (CED-78-60).

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: ACTION TAKEN ON REPORTING QUANTITIES AND AMOUNTS PAID ON GREEN AND DRY RICE PURCHASES. September 7, 1979.

The Department of Agriculture sent its statement of action taken on the recommendations in a prior GAO report (CED-79-85, June 25, 1979). The statement indicated that the Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service has taken action, consistent with one of our suggestions, to provide a common basis for reporting quantities and amounts paid on green and dry rice purchases. Further inquiries, however, show that the Service's action does not correct the basic problem.

INVENTORY OF FEDERAL FOOD, NUTRITION, AND AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS. CED-79-125, September 11, 1979.

Because information about Federal activities facilitates making decisions, setting policies, and managing and evaluating programs, GAO--with the help of the Agriculture Department and the Office of Management and Budget--turned up 359 Federal programs on food, nutrition, and agriculture administered by 28 departments and agencies.

The report describes this inventory, the information contained in it, some other related information systems, and future opportunities available in further developing this and other program inventories.

ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS HINDER EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW FISHERY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES. CED-79-120, September 12, 1979.

Under the Fishery Conservation and Management Act, plans are being developed to manage domestic and foreign fishing within 200 miles of the U.S. coastline.

Plans establishing quotas and other restrictions will be developed for 70 species of fish. GAO review of two of the nine plans in effect showed that enforcement has been weak. Action is needed to strengthen enforcement of these plans and to avoid similar problems in future plans.

AGRICULTURAL TRADE: ISSUES AFFECTING U.S. AGRICULTURAL POLICY. CED-79-130, September 14, 1979.

Agricultural trade is one of the few bright spots in U.S. trade, providing a positive balance of payments of over \$14 billion in 1978. However, while our exports provide billions of dollars to the U.S. economy, they also may help subsidize the agricultural system of some developed countries and may actually hinder agricultural development in some developing nations. Food imports may threaten the viability of certain types of U.S. farmers while contributing to income inequities in the exporting country. This staff study uses U.S. agricultural trade with Mexico as an example of how some of these issues are manifested.



PRESERVING AMERICA'S FARMLAND--A GOAL THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUPPORT. CED-79-109, September 20, 1979.

Concern is growing about the amount of farmland being converted to urban and other nonagricultural uses. Estimates of the loss range from 3 to 5 million acres a year, of which roughly half is considered to be prime farmland particularly suitable for cultivation.

Available evidence suggests that agricultural technology and resources such as new crop varieties, irrigation, fertilizer, and energy--have limitations and cannot compensate indefinitely for farmland losses.

Government control of our Nation's land use traditionally rests at the State and local levels, but the Federal Government can be more supportive of efforts to preserve farmland, especially prime acreage,

- through its own programs,
- by formulating a national preservation policy and goals, and
- by delineating what the Federal role should be in guiding and assisting State and local efforts to retain farmland.

UNITED STATES-JAPAN TRADE: ISSUES AND PROBLEMS. ID-79-53, September 21, 1979.

The U.S.-Japan trade imbalance has created serious concern because it reflects underlying economic factors as well as differences in trade policy and attitudes toward exporting.

GAO analyzes these factors, contrasts U.S. and Japanese trade policies, and points out specific problems in the Japanese market through case studies from seven U.S. industries--computers, automobiles, telecommunications, color television, machine tools, logs and lumber, and soybeans.

These trade issues involve not only a trillion dollar market, but also U.S. political and national security considerations beyond the scope of this report.

The report provides a factual base for trade policy decisions by the Congress.

SCIENCE INDICATORS: IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND INTERPRETATION. PAD-79-35, September 25, 1979.

The National Science Board's Science Indicators report are collections of measures which attempt to portray significant trends in the condition and direction of U.S. science and technology. Development of these indicators is a very complex and difficult task, and the art is still in an early stage of evolution.

The National Science Board and the National Science Foundation staff should continue to experiment in the Science Indicator series by developing and testing new indicators. They should emphasize a more conceptual approach which first identifies what will be measured, and then generates the appropriate data. Attempts should be made to develop indicators of the process and substance of research and to better differentiate between science and technology. More interpretation of the meaning of indicators should be included in future reports.

PERSPECTIVES ON TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL PAYMENTS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. ID-79-11, October 10, 1979.

GAO discusses many of the key issues related to improving the U.S. balance of trade and international payments. This summary raises questions that need to be addressed in developing a coordinated and balanced approach to U.S. problems now and over the longer term.

CHANGES NEEDED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE OVERSEAS FOOD DONATION PROGRAM. ID-79-25, October 15, 1979.

The overseas food donation program is not completely meeting its objective of distributing food to improve the lives of the poorest people in the poorest countries. In addition, program planning should be expanded to contribute to development in these countries.

The program's split administration by AID, Agriculture, and OMB needs to be centralized. The Congress should enact legislation to achieve this and should establish full authority and responsibility for Title II of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 in AID and its new umbrella agency--the International Development Co-operation Agency. Further, the Congress should consider transferring the new Title II food-for-development program to these agencies.

FEDERAL WEATHER PROGRAM MUST HAVE STRONGER CENTRAL DIRECTION.  
LCD-80-10, October 16, 1979.

Weather programs operated by seven Federal agencies are expected to cost \$650 million in fiscal year 1979; larger expenditures are planned for the future.

The Department of Commerce should provide stronger central management of the programs to eliminate duplication.

STRONGER EMPHASIS ON MARKET DEVELOPMENT NEEDED IN AGRICULTURE'S EXPORT CREDIT SALES PROGRAM. ID-80-01, October 26, 1979.

Since 1956 the Commodity Credit Corporation has financed over \$7 billion in agricultural exports under its Export Credit Sales Program. Originally initiated to help dispose of surplus commodities, the Program has become a primary means of developing foreign markets for U.S. exports.

GAO recommends several administrative and statutory changes to strengthen the Program's market development objective.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: IMPOUNDMENT OF FUNDS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, AND THE RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD. OGC-80-3, November 6, 1979.

On September 27, 1979, the President's thirteenth special message for fiscal year 1979 was transmitted to the Congress pursuant to the Impoundment Control Act of 1974. The special message proposed four new deferrals of budget authority totaling approximately \$61.9 million and a revision to one previously transmitted deferral increasing the amount deferred by approximately \$3.8 million.

A MISSION BUDGET STRUCTURE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE-- A FEASIBILITY STUDY. PAD-80-08, November 16, 1979.

At the request of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies, GAO explored the technical feasibility and utility of mission budgeting for the Department of Agriculture.

GAO, in developing the mission budget model, identified nine missions that encompass the responsibilities or end purposes

of USDA. GAO and USDA officials believe that mission budgeting is technically feasible. Additionally, GAO believes that mission budgeting provides a different and potentially beneficial framework for congressional analysis of budget proposals.

The subcommittee may wish to experiment with the mission budget concept to better understand it and to determine if its benefits can be achieved in practice for Agriculture's programs.

ESTIMATED PERSONNEL NEEDS OF THE AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE--ARE THEY RELIABLE? FPCD-80-5, November 26, 1979.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's budget request for personnel increased significantly after fiscal year 1977 due to work brought on by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 and by Department of Agriculture policies. The Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture and Related Agencies, Senate Committee on Appropriations, asked GAO to review the validity of load forecasting systems for determining staffing requirements.

GAO found that these requests may not be reliable because of

--weaknesses in the way work measurement standards are developed and

--a lack of documentation needed to assess the validity of workload forecasts.

Service headquarters should increase its oversight of State and county administrative offices, but the Service believes these offices should manage their own day-to-day operations. GAO believes the Service should improve the way it implements administrative procedures related to procurements with Nation-wide applicability.

PHOSPHATES: A CASE STUDY OF A VALUABLE, DEPLETING MINERAL IN AMERICA. EMD-80-21, November 30, 1979.

This report discussed the many problems and long leadtimes involved in phosphate development in the United States, world's largest producer of phosphates. Phosphate rock is the only known practical source of phosphorus, crucial to fertilizer used in agriculture.

Over the next two decades, the richest U.S. phosphate deposits are likely to be depleted. There is cause for concern as to how new sources may be developed to meet the Nation's growing agricultural needs.

GAO recommends that the highest levels of Government begin promptly an assessment of access impediments to phosphate minerals and review of the Nation's long-range phosphate position regarding future availability, including legislative changes as may be needed to ensure supply.

FOOD PRICE INFLATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES.  
CED-80-24, December 18, 1979.

Although American consumers are concerned about rapid food price increases, actually they are spending less of their income on food than in the past and more for other goods and services, such as housing and transportation.

Compared to many other countries, U.S. food prices are among the lowest. Americans, on the average, spend less of their income on food and pay lower prices than do many foreign consumers. However, low-income Americans can pay up to 40 percent of disposable income for food.

Even though U.S. food prices are lower and rising less rapidly than prices in many other countries, opportunities to improve the U.S. food production system and stabilize food costs should be sought.

SUMMARY OF A REPORT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL FOREIGN INVESTMENT DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1978. CED-80-37,  
December 18, 1979.

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 requires foreign investors to register their agricultural land purchases with the Department of Agriculture. The report cites a number of problems and potential problems with the act's implementation.

I N D E X

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