



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

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A five-year food program prepared by six Interior Department bureaus to increase the production of meat, fish, dairy products, beans, and potatoes was submitted today to Food Administrator Claude R. Wickard by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes. Secretary Ickes estimated that the program in the five-year period would provide food enough to feed 10 million persons for a year, assuming its immediate adoption and adequate supplies of manpower, materials and money.

Proposed as a specific contribution toward meeting the Nation's food plans, the individual reports were submitted with a statement that the originating agencies are prepared to undertake all or any parts of the program to the extent that they are authorized and enabled to do so by wartime conditions.

Stripped to these five major critical war foods, and restricted to the areas in which Interior Department bureaus have special administrative responsibilities, the components of the program were based on time schedules from 1943 to 1947 and detailed the production estimated to result from specified investments of manpower, materials, and money. The resulting estimates generally show a progressive acceleration, starting from small increases in the supplies of certain critical foods this year and indicating substantial increases on a rapidly rising scale in 1944 and beyond.

The report also contained a flat statement that continuing decline in manpower, "if not relieved, will result in less production of critical foods this year rather than more."

The six agencies involved are the Fish and Wildlife Service, which has responsibility for the production of the commercial fisheries and management of wild game resources in the United States and Alaska; the Bureau of Reclamation, concerned with providing irrigation water for lands in the arid western states; the Grazing Service and the General Land Office, which are charged with the administration of large areas of Federal range lands; the Office of Indian Affairs, which administers the Indian reservations; and the Geological Survey, which has responsibility in the supply of mineral fertilizers.

On the basis of adequate supplies of critical materials, manpower including construction labor, and other production requirements, the combined proposals estimate increased contributions to the world food pool aggregating in five years 1-1/2 billion pounds of meat, 1-3/4 billion pounds of fish, 11 billion pounds of milk, almost a billion pounds of beans, and more than 100 million bushels of

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potatoes. The report states that these commodities are not offered as a balanced diet by themselves, and their translation into over-all food value sufficient on a caloric basis to sustain 10 million persons for a year is cited merely as an indication of the scope of the program.

On an annual basis these estimated increases in production would be equivalent to normal rations in these foods only for the following number of persons: 1943--meat products, 2,800,000; fish foods, -775,000 (a decrease); dairy products, 89,000; beans, 3,100,000; and potatoes, 1,513,000. By 1945 the estimates rise to: meat products, 4,397,000 persons; fish foods, 25,100,000; dairy products, 2,200,000; beans, 24,900,000; and potatoes, 9,600,000; and by 1947, to: meat products, 10,000,000 persons; fish foods, almost 100,000,000; dairy products, 6,500,000; beans, 44,900,000, and potatoes, 20,800,000.

The report emphasizes that the figures represent increases over and above the present vast production for which the Interior Department agencies have established responsibilities; also, that the estimates pertain only to the spheres in which the Interior agencies operate, and do not therefore represent over-all national totals except for fish production in which Secretary Wickard as Food Administrator has delegated national responsibility to Secretary Ickes.

With respect to current production in these fields, Secretary Ickes said that the fisheries yields would be down a little in 1943; meat, milk, and potato production would be up a little; and as for the fifth commodity--beans--he revealed that production went up 55 percent on Reclamation projects in 1942, and is expected to be up 109 percent in 1943 over the base year of 1940.

Beans, recently rationed domestically, require only eight points per pound in ticket value out of Ration Book No. 2. Dried beans in a number of varieties are in demand for lend-lease and overseas use because they keep well, are easy to ship, and are universally consumed.

Production estimates given in the Interior Department report do not include increases that also might be obtained in the supplies of fruits, specialty crops, sugar beets, cereals, fibers, and other products pertaining to foods. Likewise, without attempting to evaluate them in terms of food production, the report covers such essentials to food production as fertilizers, water resources, animals feeds, vitamin oils, and electric power for farm pumping and agricultural processing.

The six bureaus are mobilized to expand food production facilities under their jurisdictions to whatever extent they can be fitted into the national food program, and to the extent that necessary materials, equipment, manpower, and other production facilities can be made available. Brief summaries of their proposals follow:

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**--(1) Continue operation of 41 Federal irrigation projects serving water this year to 3,700,000 acres of highly productive land in 15 semi-arid states, so as to maintain the important western output of forage crops, feed grains, field crops, fruits, and vegetables. (2) Resume full-scale construction on 24 projects that have been shut down by the War Production Board, and

start construction on 15 new projects in order to extend the areas for which water would be available by 1945 to 5,800,000 acres and by 1947 to 9,800,000 acres. (3) Continue operations of Reclamation power plants, and expand hydroelectric production on some projects, to serve irrigation pumps, farm homes, and agricultural processing plants.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE--(1) Increase the yield of the great commercial fisheries by expediting the alleviation of unfavorable fishing conditions caused by the war, and stimulating the fullest possible production in Pacific, Atlantic, Gulf, and inland waters. (2) Operate the Federal fish hatcheries to furnish seed stock for the ever-increasing number of domestic farm ponds. (3) Utilize the National Wildlife Refuges for crop and livestock production. (4) Encourage the raising of domestic rabbits and greater use of wild game meat for home consumption. (5) Intensify cooperative predator and rodent control work to reduce death losses of livestock and poultry.

GRAZING SERVICE--(1) Readjust the numbers of cattle and sheep to full carrying capacity of the 142 million acres of range within the Federal grazing districts with some adjustments up and some down, averaging an over-all increase in stocking estimated at 10 percent. (2) Intensify the range improvement program to yield larger crops and heavier weights of calves and lambs. (3) Divert to meat production 100,000 excess horses and additional thousands of game animals on the Federal range.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE--(1) Increase the livestock carrying capacity on 40 million acres of public lands outside of grazing districts by accelerating its programs of range development and leasing to secure controlled grazing. (2) Foster the expansion of commercial fertilizer production from the large potash and phosphate reserves on the public domain.

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS--(1) Bring into immediate cultivation 60,000 acres of idle lands that are irrigable from existing canals, to raise additional potatoes, beans, cereal, and forage crops. (2) Increase the quality and weight of livestock on 33 million acres of Indian range by fostering improved management practices and better control of predatory animals. (3) Promote self sustenance on Indian reservations by increasing the number and size of school farms and home gardens, expanding their facilities for dehydration and canning, and encouraging prudent utilization of fish and wildlife resources.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY--(1) Continue its work on mineral fertilizers, promote their development, and lease Government-owned deposits of phosphates and potash needed for increasing crop production. (2) Maintain its records on water resources and make available the factual data required for the day-to-day operations of hundreds of thousands of irrigators and stock ranchers.

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