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The Militarization of Agriculture: Cold War, Foreign Aid, and the Expansion of the American Agricultural Welfare System Under President Eisenhower

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The Militarization of Agriculture:
Cold War, Foreign Aid, and the Expansion of the American Agricultural
Welfare System Under President Eisenhower

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A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

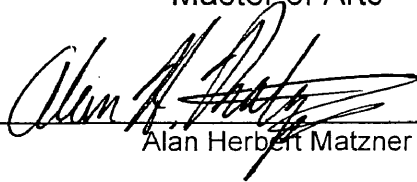
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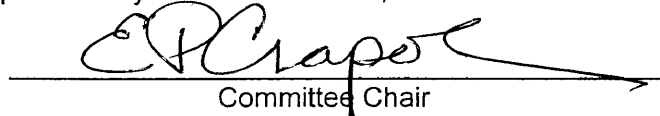
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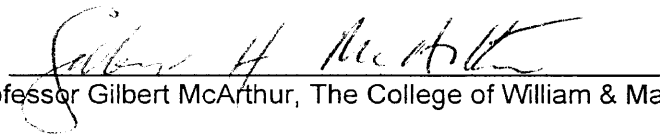


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ABSTRACT PAGE

Food is one of the elemental needs of the human race. The importance of such an asset is difficult to overestimate. The availability of inexpensive, nutritious, and plentiful food and fiber benefits the economic, social, and security concerns of a nation. America benefits from industrious efforts and fertile lands to produce a bounty of food and fiber that in no small part has aided its ascension to world power.

During the cold war, America's agricultural bounty became a symbol of power, prestige, and bounty that served as a psychological weapon against the Soviet Union. As a result, the American farmer was elevated beyond a mere producer of sustenance to an active cold war participant. The ramifications of agriculture's role in the cold war have lasted for decades in the form of subsidies, surpluses, and a lasting welfare system for farmers and agricultural interests.

This thesis explores how the United States, through the use of such programs as Public Law 480, sought to exploit its agricultural production during the 1950s. The Eisenhower administration, seeking to make use of less expensive alternatives in its containment policies, saw a means of reducing surplus foodstuffs and financial costs while also offsetting possible Soviet aggression. By analyzing foreign policy documents, agricultural policy and trade publications, and surveying the views of those farming at that time, details of the cold war era's lasting legacy on agriculture are readily apparent.

Principally, the cold war fostered apathy on the part of Congress and the Administration as they passed agricultural policies that promoted surplus production. Likewise, farmers, buoyed by technological and methodological advances that further fueled production, were not motivated to participate in surplus-curbing programs. The fear of communist aggression suspended efforts to address the surplus issue in any meaningful way. In the end, the cold war furthered the agricultural sector's dependence on government subsidies, creating a welfare culture and moving food and fiber production into an increasingly militaristic role.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wife, Lora, who has supported me throughout this effort and provided me with the proper mix of patience, prodding, and love.

I would like to thank the members of my thesis committee for their support and patience. In particular, Dr. Edward Crapol for his mentoring and advice.

Prologue

The cold war changed America. From the highest rungs of government to large and small businesses to television and literature, the cold war pervaded American life. The repercussions of the cold war still linger within the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, the globalization of our economy, and even the groceries in our supermarket. An oft overlooked aspect of the cold war's impression on American society and economy is the transformation of American agriculture.

To this day, agriculture bears the scars of cold war foreign policy on the policies and principles set down by the federal government. Specifically, the cold war lent the fear and insecurity necessary to propagate policies that extended and expanded the agricultural sector's dependence on subsidy and supports. The great strength and vitality of American agriculture during the cold war only furthered the need to maintain that great strategic and psychological edge in the ideological battle with communism.¹

The Eisenhower administration simultaneously faced the heightening tensions of the cold war as well as a burgeoning surplus in American agriculture. These two disparate challenges became intertwined in the 1950s as the Eisenhower administration sought to manage foreign and agricultural policy. Yet, as the cold war forced the United States into preparations for a possible militaristic conflict, these

¹ Bruce F. Johnston, "Farm Surpluses and Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, Vol. 10, Issue 1 (Oct., 1957), 11. Also, Mitchel B. Wallerstein, *Food for War-Food for Peace: United States Food Aid in a Global Context* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, The MIT Press, 1980), 7-8 & 21-22. For administration comment on agricultural superiority see *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1958-1960, IV*, 173-174. "Minutes of the 76th Meeting of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, July 8, 1958."

much maligned surpluses became strategic assets. The Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (Public Law 480) allowed the Eisenhower administration to use surplus goods as developmental aid, trade leverage, and incentive for loyalty to the United States. The result was a marriage of agricultural surplus to cold war foreign policy that indelibly marked the U.S. farm sector.

This policy had unintended consequences. By attempting to navigate a minefield of conflicting interests, agricultural policy makers ignored the purely economic considerations of supply and demand. Subsidization of agriculture, which was meant to alleviate farm income concerns, spurred production. Dramatic technological advances in machinery, chemicals, hybrids, and technique added even more to impressive production increases. Domestically, these surpluses were scorned for their economic costs to the U.S. taxpayer. However, the surpluses also demonstrated American supremacy in the field of agriculture. As a result, the Eisenhower administration was faced with choosing between designing a sound agricultural policy or using surpluses as a tool of foreign policy.

Similarly, American farmers – faced with the broad societal apprehension of the cold war – confronted challenging problems in the operation of their farms. Competition, increasing costs, and flat prices fed an atmosphere that favored large farms over small farms and overproduction in the face of a burgeoning surplus. These contradictions and pressures were not fueled entirely by the cold war. Instead, the cold war's omnipresent existence in American society, economy, and policy lent considerable impetus to the maintenance of a welfare system for farmers. This

welfare system constructed a security net for the farm sector as well as a strategic foodstuff stockpile – a none-too-small advantage in any possible World War III scenario.

The voice of American cold war era farmers often has been neglected in considerations of American cold war foreign and agricultural policy. A limited number of snapshots from magazines, newspapers, and other media offer an incomplete understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the American farmer. Few of these records delve into any detail, nor do they contain numerous individual responses. In order to fill this gap in the narrative of the cold war and agriculture, this study conducted a survey aimed at garnering a broader glimpse of farmers' views of this tense time in American history.

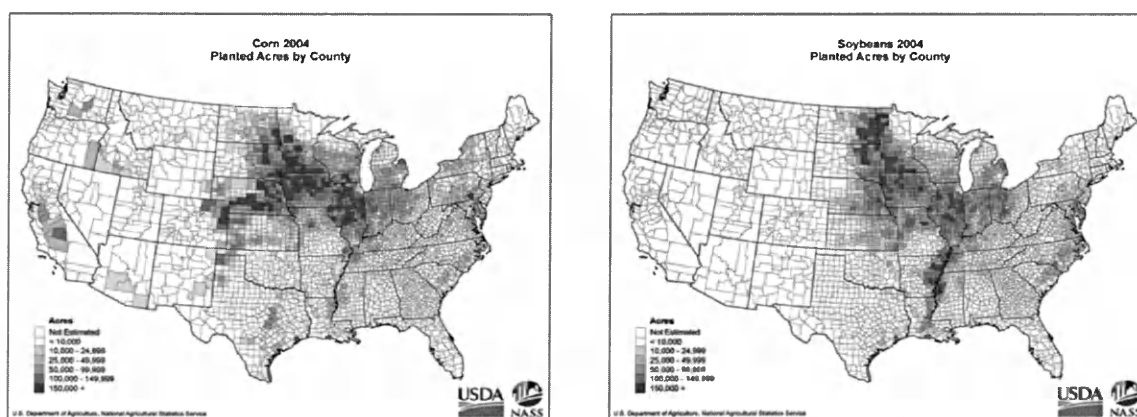
The survey was unabashedly limited in scope. The survey was aimed at a specific geographic region and at farmers or agribusiness members² who experienced the 1950s and 1960s. Today this region is solidly part of the corn-soybean belt³ of American agriculture – crops that grew in importance during the second half of the 20th century. These two crops also are among the most historically subsidized crops and remain so today.⁴ At present, corn and soybeans are used for goods and products far beyond simple food and feedstuffs of the past. The list of applications for these crops includes, but is not limited to, the following: fuel oil-substitutes (ethanol and

² Agribusiness members include farm cooperative and grain elevator manager and rural farm business operators.

³ Stretching from Ohio westward to Nebraska, this region includes Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, Kansas, and Michigan.

⁴ U.S. General Accounting Office, *Farm Programs: Information on Recipients of Federal Payments*, (Washington, D.C., 2001) 22. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Farm Income Data. Based on calculations of direct farm payments and principle crops. Corn in particular has been and remains heavily subsidized.

soy-biodiesel), processed sugar and oil extracts (corn syrups and soybean oils), and industrial chemicals and goods (degradable plastics, inks, and adhesives). These two crops have grown to dominate planted acres in the regions surveyed. As such, these farmers are intimately familiar with farm subsidies and the agricultural policies that have created them.



*Corn and Soybean Planted Acres by County 2004, USDA, NASS.*⁵

The survey, which consisted of thirty-three multiple choice and short answer questions, was constructed in a manner to help clarify and enlighten certain aspects of agricultural policy. Additionally, farmers' impressions of foreign policy, and the cold war more generally, were queried in an attempt to capture insights into those areas. The results of the survey included both quantifiable responses and interpretive answers. As such, textual replies were reviewed and analyzed to provide contextual background and perception. Quantifiable responses were evaluated via computations and simple analyses via a Microsoft Access database and several Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.

⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, http://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts_and_Maps/Crops_County/cr-pl.asp.

The scientific nature of the survey certainly was not sophisticated; rather, it was an effort to provide a specific view on history, a limited oral history, that could be utilized to shed light on broader foreign policy topics. The results offer first-hand expertise, which is meant as an addendum or companion to the overarching study of foreign policy, cold war, and agriculture. The responses provide documentation of the complexity, confusion, and difficulty that permeated life in agriculture during this time period. In the end, the survey lends a voice to farmers and exemplifies the discord in agriculture that limited efforts to identify the cause of surplus and devise a solution.

The Soviet Union's perceived power fueled domestic fears and led to the entrenchment of the containment policy. This heightening of the cold war during the 1950s provided continued basis for federal intervention in agriculture. The disdain for agricultural surplus subsidization was tempered by cold war apprehension. One result was continued failure to address the growing contradictions within American agriculture involving labor input, production output, and price supports. Ultimately, this confluence of trepidation and inaction only further rooted American agriculture in subsidization.

The immense stockpiles of food and fiber, much like the military weaponry build-up, projected American strength. The psychological value of food, as well as its use as a development and aid tool, cemented agriculture's role in the cold war standoff. The Eisenhower administration made use of this advantage through tools such as Public Law 480. Meanwhile, farmers were caught in a web of complex agricultural policy, technological innovation, and economic pressure. With no

organized effort to change the surplus situation, along with mounting cold war anxiety, American agriculture became ensconced in a system of surplus and subsidy.

The Militarization of Agriculture

Cold War, Foreign Aid, and the Expansion of the American Agricultural

Welfare System Under President Eisenhower

“Defense-supporting economic assistance is being furnished or is contemplated to carefully selected and strategically located free world countries in a wide arc which virtually surrounds the Soviet bloc. These countries are united with the U.S. in a common cause: to resist Communist penetration or domination of the free world. U.S. assistance is designed to help them achieve the economic strength which will, in the long run, enable them to maintain without further aid the forces which the U.S. believes to be required.” - Status of the Mutual Security Program as of June 30, 1955¹

The success of post-World War II assistance programs, such as the Marshall Plan, solidified the use of foreign aid as an invaluable aspect of U.S. foreign policy. In subsequent years, aid became a method of not only providing assistance for the reconstruction or development of infrastructure suitable for free enterprise, but also a means of garnering influence in and the admiration of recipient nations. As the United States, the Soviet Union, and the world slipped deeper into the grasp of cold war, aid became a vital factor in supporting the cause of the “free world” within nations unable to bear that burden alone. Whether under the guise of humanitarian aid or

¹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [henceforth *FRUS*]: *Foreign Aid and Economic Defense Policy 1955-1957, X* (Washington D.C., 1992), 17. “Status of the Mutual Security Program as of June 30, 1955.” Details of United States foreign policy concerning agriculture, surpluses, and foreign aid are found within the Department of State’s publication *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*. The Department of State website (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/>) describes the series as presenting “the official documentary historical record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity.” Further, “the series, which is produced by the State Department’s Office of the Historian, began in 1861 and now comprises more than 350 individual volumes.” *FRUS* proved to be an invaluable resource for locating documentation of the Eisenhower administration’s policy and strategy discussions concerning the cold war and surpluses.

developmental assistance, foreign aid was a tool and weapon of foreign policy employed by the United States as leverage against the communist threat. In this role, foreign aid exploited American agricultural surplus with consequences still affecting agriculture today.

In the years immediately following World War II, the majority of aid was given toward reconstructing the infrastructures of Europe and Japan (see Figure 1.1).² However, by the end of the Korean War in 1953, assistance programs instead supported the underdeveloped nations of the world – not for reconstruction, but for development and creation of infrastructure. In the view of President Dwight Eisenhower’s administration, these underdeveloped nations faced “three main demands upon [their] resources:” their ability to defend themselves, their ability to sustain their “current consumption,” and their attempts to invest in their own development.³ This trio of demands was perceived to be more than an underdeveloped nation could sustain alone; hence, the Eisenhower administration felt it incumbent to provide the additional assistance necessary to meet these burdens.

² U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Development Evaluation and Information, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations*, <<http://quesdb.cdie.org/gbk/index.html>>. The report is commonly known as *The Greenbook*. In the period 1946-1948, aid to Europe and Japan constituted 71.6%, and during the period 1949-1952, aid to Europe and Japan constituted 84.7%. By 1953-1961, aid there amounted to 33.1%.

³ *FRUS: Foreign Aid and Economic Defense Policy 1955-1957*, X, 17. “Status of the Mutual Security Program as of June 30, 1955, Definition and Scope of Defense-supporting Programs.”

U.S. World Aid				
Economic Military Assistance Loans and Grants				
in millions, U.S. Historical Dollars (non-inflation adjusted)				
Program Name	Post-War Relief Period 1946-48	Marshall Plan Period 1949-52	Mutual Security Act Period 1953-61	Foreign Assistance Act Period 1962-99
World Total	\$12,963	\$28,690	\$43,330	\$441,416
Western Europe	\$8,300	\$23,078	\$13,166	\$35,286
Japan	\$980	\$1,221	\$1,188	\$565
Sub-Total	\$9,279	\$24,299	\$14,355	\$35,851
Western Europe & Japan's Percentage of U.S. Total Aid	71.6%	84.7%	33.1%	8.1%

Figure 1.1: U.S. World Aid, U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Development Evaluation and Information, U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations. The report is commonly known as "The Greenbook," <http://gesdb.usaid.gov/gbk/index.html>.

Although U.S. aid was proclaimed as support for development in underdeveloped nations, it also was decidedly focused on curtailing communist expansion.⁴ U.S. aid packages were aimed at providing the economic and technical assistance needed by an underdeveloped nation in order to construct the infrastructure necessary for economic progress and self-sustenance. The United States hoped that aid would combat communism by presenting the freedoms, opportunities, and bounty of a democratic-capitalist system. In addition, aid was understood to be a form of binding, a "linkage," which would garner the receiving nation's loyalty in exchange for U.S. protection.⁵ As aid programs grew increasingly into integral cold war assets,

⁴ FRUS: *Foreign Aid and Economic Defense Policy 1955-1957*, X, 17. According to notes: "U.S. security interests dictate that they [underdeveloped nations] make adequate provision for these needs [defense, current consumption, and investment], not only to sustain the necessary will, strength, and stability to face the Soviet threat and to provide constructive and attractive alternatives to Communism, but also, through economic development generally, to reduce the need for future U.S. assistance."

⁵ Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1996*, (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1997), 267, 271. This term was more generally tied to Nixon era policies, in which political and economic issues were closely related. For example, if one wanted economic aid it was understood that political/military/diplomatic considerations would be given in return. This term is equally applicable to earlier administrations' policies.

the United States sought to utilize aid as a means of securing commitments of loyalty and spheres of interest around the world.

Within this context of U.S. foreign aid and the nation's global anti-communist crusade, the American farmer increasingly became a part of U.S. cold war policy. Burgeoning agricultural surpluses and President Eisenhower's fiscal ideology made aid packages involving agricultural goods an attractive alternative to dollar aid.⁶ As a result, American farmers became enmeshed in a policy of containment against communism in which their productive capacity was harnessed as a weapon of the cold war and as an agent of national security. Food and fiber production was used in various forms: directly as aid, as the basis for loans, as a lever in trade, as a tool of diplomatic negotiation, and – importantly – as a symbol of American hegemonic power. As such, farmers' contribution to U.S. foreign policy had a dramatic and lasting impact on the world as well as on their own livelihoods.

Cold War, Hot Aid Battle

As relations deteriorated into what would become the cold war following World War II, the friction of two states with competing socio-political systems brought to the fore the importance of foreign aid as cold war leverage. The success of aid and assistance programs in Western Europe and Japan, particularly the non-

⁶ Frederick H. Hartmann and Robert L. Wendzel, *America's Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1994), 233. Hartmann and Wendzel write that "U.S. national security spending was more than \$50 billion (more than 13% of GNP)" and that Eisenhower saw "the Soviet threat as much economic as military." Thus, aid packages utilizing non-dollar aid, such as agricultural surpluses, were attractive from a fiscal standpoint. This was a result of Eisenhower's belief that America's economic health required a balanced budget, and thus, he advocated what was quickly labeled "the great equation" – a balanced economic-military emphasis on strategic superiority with major force reductions" – a fulfilling of the more "bang for the buck" conception.

military nature of aid, set the stage for foreign aid's prominence as a means of competition in the cold war without the risk of outright military conflict. Indeed, aid pitted the economic systems of the two combatants against one another in a proxy of their ideological struggle. The very success of early U.S. and Western aid programs inevitably led to the evolution of Soviet aid programs that emerged by the mid-1950s.

After the death of Stalin in 1953 and the maneuvers for leadership power that followed, the Soviet Union began to construct a foreign aid program of its own. By 1955, the Eisenhower administration was concerned by the threat of Soviet aid. At National Security Council (NSC) meetings, the topic of Soviet aid was discussed as a "significant [development] affecting U.S. security." Specifically, the NSC was concerned about Soviet offers of aid to "underdeveloped areas of the free world" that were less tied to military-security alliances. These aid packages were increasingly seen by some underdeveloped nations as better than U.S. gifts and loans for hard currency because of the absence of such military linkage.⁷

The Soviet initiative was a grave matter for the Eisenhower administration because the United States had held an advantage in aid programs in the decade following World War II. Not surprisingly, responses to the threat ranged widely. CIA Director Allen Dulles suggested developing a counter propaganda campaign, stating that "this aid constituted the first step which ultimately led to a Communist take-over," while Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson added, "the Soviet program actually

⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 28-30. "Memorandum of Discussion at the 266th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, November 15, 1955." The Soviet aid packages were in the form of low interest loans in return for local currencies and exports, a type of aid package absent from the U.S. aid war chest.

constituted a new form of colonialism.”⁸ Indeed, the NSC was alarmed by the Soviet aid program and feared the possibility that Soviet power might be strengthened by these expansionist tendencies. One area of concern, addressed by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, was the Soviet willingness to capitalize on local trade and economic issues. One example involved the Soviets absorbing Burmese surplus rice, an action the United States was unwilling to take since it already had a rice surplus.⁹

Further, the Secretary bemoaned that these countries were “enormously impressed” with the industrial progress the Soviet Union had made in a relatively short period of time. Beyond the Soviet aid program, the United States felt threatened by the positive perception the Soviet model of development was receiving from some areas of the world. At the January 18, 1956 NSC meeting, Secretary Dulles addressed the dramatic impression the Soviet Union’s rapid industrialization had had on the underdeveloped world. According to Dulles, the situation “challenged the industrial and political supremacy that up until now the West could maintain over the underdeveloped nations of the World.” The “Great American Experiment” had been surpassed by the 30-year-old “Great Russian Experiment.” Dulles believed that the U.S. aid program was dated and insufficient, and he direly prophesied that if the United States failed to solve this problem, “the Soviet Union would end up dominating all of Asia.”¹⁰

⁸ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X, 30.*

⁹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X, 32-33.*

¹⁰ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X, 32-33, 64.* “Memorandum of Discussion at the 267th Meeting of the National Security Council, Camp David, Maryland, November 21, 1955” and “Memorandum of Discussion at the 273rd Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, January 18, 1956.”

According to Dulles, the Soviets experimented with their own aid program because of the successful “free world . . . military formulas” that had forced them to move toward “less violent and militarily aggressive policies.”¹¹ In essence, the very success of containment had pushed the Soviet Union to consider alternative methods of improving its strategic position around the globe. Despite believing that Soviet aid offers were superficial and insincere, President Eisenhower stated that the United States must balance military and economic aid and be ready to adjust to the situation as demanded by evolving Soviet policy.¹²

The appearance of a less hostile Soviet Union caused many problems for the Eisenhower administration’s foreign policy. Countries on the periphery of the Soviet bloc hoped to remain neutral, and U.S. aid packages that required them to “take sides” in order to qualify for aid offended them.¹³ Further, the perceived military linkage made the alternative Soviet programs, absent such linkage, more attractive. Some administration officials argued that if countries were allowed to remain neutral, the U.S. programs would be more “palatable psychologically.” Additionally, officials contended that “the Soviet bloc would lose a propaganda target in that future U.S. aid would be more positively slanted toward peace rather than preparation for war.” Further, if the United States advocated development over mutual security, the appearance of “linkage” between aid and military assistance would be reduced.¹⁴ Such a policy change, however, met with opposition. Some members of the

¹¹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 32-33, 64.

¹² *Ibid.*, 53-54.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 103. “Memorandum From the Chief of the International Branch, Bureau of the Budget (MACY), to the Director of the Bureau (Brundage), Washington, September 4, 1956.” No specific countries are stated.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

administration and Congress wished to restrict aid to only those willing to stand with the United States against communism.¹⁵

Despite the perceived threat of a focused Soviet aid program, the Soviet policy shift validated the success of previous U.S. aid endeavors. Indeed, the use of foreign aid to underdeveloped nations fit perfectly into President Eisenhower's formulation of a New Look foreign policy. This policy was meant to obtain "more bang for the buck."¹⁶ It was founded on a "massive retaliation" philosophy leveraging nuclear might as an offset to a large, costly, standing army. Eisenhower's paramount concerns regarding foreign policy were to deter a Soviet first atomic attack and to hinder expansion of the Soviet bloc. Further, the policy supported efforts aimed to destabilize and fragment the Soviet bloc, hopefully leading to the bloc's eventual break-up.¹⁷

Within the Eisenhower administration's New Look formulation, foreign economic aid was a crucial element. In fact, Secretary Dulles believed "the problem of foreign aid was far and away the most important single aspect of our foreign policy."¹⁸ Dulles's view echoed sentiments of the President, who once expressed the view that foreign aid was "the cheapest insurance in the world."¹⁹ According to Dulles, the United States was trying to place the Soviet rulers into a position in which

¹⁵ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 103.

¹⁶ LaFeber, *America*, 154.

¹⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 118-123. "Memorandum of Discussion Between the President's Citizen Advisers on the Mutual Security Program and the Secretary of State, Washington, October 25, 1956."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34. "Memorandum of Discussion at the 267th Meeting of the National Security Council, Camp David, Maryland, November 21, 1955."

they must “concentrate on their own problems.”²⁰ “Our so-called foreign aid program,” he said, “which is really not foreign aid because it isn’t aid to foreigners but aid to us, is an indispensable factor in carrying out our foreign policy.”²¹ In order to measure the effectiveness of aid spent, Dulles argued that one must consider the only alternative: communist domination.²²

Despite their regard for foreign aid, Eisenhower and Dulles also recognized aid’s expensive nature. Eisenhower, in particular, was strident in his desire to maintain “fiscal morality” in aid policy.²³ In particular, dollar aid denoted for military purposes increasingly was seen by the administration as “progressively more expensive” due to the “cumulative cost of maintenance and to the increased cost of weapons.”²⁴ Others outside the administration were highly critical of the “giveaway mania” of foreign aid programs which supported “projects too dubious to attract private capital.”²⁵ And Congress, too, had become “thoroughly fed up with foreign aid” expenditures.²⁶ Faced with growing criticism of aid programs, the administration

²⁰ Dulles’s point hints at a policy aimed at revealing the contradictions of the Soviet system both politically and economically. Dulles hoped foreign aid would exacerbate tensions between the Soviet Union and its satellites as well as place the Soviet Union at a disadvantage in terms of the ability to spend on economic assistance. The policy can be seen as a precursor of Reagan era hyper-military spending that placed the Soviet Union at a severe disadvantage, ultimately adding to the pressures that toppled the regime.

²¹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 118. “Memorandum of Discussion Between the President’s Citizen Advisers on the Mutual Security Program and the Secretary of State, Washington, October 25, 1956.” In the mind of Dulles, the Soviet policy was a chess game, in which the Soviets wished to move to “checkmate,” at which time, they would inhabit a position “of such superiority that war won’t be necessary.”

²² *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 120-121.

²³ Thomas Zoumas, *Reevaluating Eisenhower: Eisenhower’s Foreign Economic Policy: The Case of Latin America*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 156. Zoumas takes this quote from a letter from Eisenhower to John Foster Dulles, June 20, 1952.

²⁴ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, IX*, 121. “Memorandum of Discussion Between the President’s Citizen Advisers on the Mutual Security Program and the Secretary of State, Washington, October 25, 1956.” See also Peter Toma, *The Politics of Food for Peace: Executive-Legislative Interaction* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1967), 26. In his book, Toma describes the four periods of post-WWII aid and recognizes that the United States makes a shift from military support to economic assistance. He stated that, by 1963, economic assistance accounted for more than “three times the military assistance” of U.S. aid programs.

²⁵ Henry Hazlitt, “The Giveaway Mania Grows,” *Newsweek*, 29 (November 1954): 90.

²⁶ “Needed: New Kind of Foreign Aid,” *Business Week*, 9 (September 1954): 166-167.

began to investigate new, less expensive forms of aid. One option – intriguing because of multiple potential benefits – was the use of agricultural surpluses. Theoretically, the use of food and fiber as aid would assist not only the people of the recipient nation, but also American farmers and taxpayers by reducing the domestic surplus and its associated costs. Further, it was a non-aggressive and peace-oriented type of aid, beneficial in both image and development in the recipient country.²⁷

By the fall of 1956, the administration formulated the New Look strategy in economic aid spending.²⁸ Fiscally conservative, the Eisenhower administration sought to find the “best and cheapest means” to “prevent the Iron Curtain from advancing further.”²⁹ In Eisenhower’s view, the United States had not gone about its aid policy in the right way; that is, to first consider U.S. national security interests. The next step was to determine the effects upon the recipient nations.³⁰ The basic concept on which Eisenhower’s policy was premised was providing aid while simultaneously curbing the associated costs.

However, efforts to reduce outright dollar aid did not come without repercussions. The administration felt it necessary not to alarm any nation in which aid or military support would be reduced or modified. In the minds of key leaders, it was important to maintain stability, and any efforts to reduce aid or to modify aid’s nature should not result in destabilization. By maintaining stability, the administration hoped to foster private investment by U.S. and European corporations. The dilemma

²⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 130-131. “Memorandum of Discussion at the 301st Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, October 26, 1956.”

²⁸ Douglas Kinnard, *The Secretary of Defense*, (Lexington, KY, 1980) p. 44-45.

²⁹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, IX*, 130-131. “Memorandum of Discussion at the 301st Meeting of the National Security Council.”

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 130. U.S. national security interests included military, political, and economic concerns.

of not alarming recipient nations while still making aid palatable domestically was not easy, however. In fact, for the NSC, the U.S. aid program was viewed as “the most critical problem facing the present administration.” In addition, the solution for the aid problem was one in which the NSC “[didn’t] yet have the slightest idea what the answer [was].”³¹

Soviet Aid and the Escalation of Economic Warfare

Through 1956 the Eisenhower administration found itself increasingly alarmed by the threat of Soviet economic aid programs. The working group of the Subcommittee on Soviet Economic Penetration determined that since 1953, the Soviet Union had employed economic aid programs aimed at the underdeveloped world. The Soviet Union had spent in excess of \$1 billion on aid and credits in addition to \$360 million for arms. Although this amounted to far less than the economic aid provided globally by the United States, this new economic offensive launched by the Soviet Union placed the United States in a defensive position (see Appendix Tables 1.1 & 1.2).³² Specifically, the administration felt threatened by the Soviet Union’s successful exploitation of “nationalistic fervor, anti-colonialism, and neutralism in underdeveloped countries from Eastern Europe to Southeast Asia.”³³

³¹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, IX*, 129-132. “Memorandum of Discussion at the 301st Meeting of the National Security Council.”

³² Between 1953 and 1955, the United States spent in excess of \$13.8 billion on economic and military assistance in the form of loans and grants. See U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), *Greenbook*, available from World Wide Web: <http://quesdb.usaid.gov/gbk/index.html>. See Appendix Tables 1.1 & 1.2.

³³ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy; Foreign Information Program 1955-1957, IX*, 44-45. “Report by the Working Group of the Subcommittee on Soviet Economic Penetration, Washington, March 11, 1957.”

Additionally, the Soviet Union capitalized on the discontent from the United States' adherence to a non-competition policy, wherein the United States avoided offering assistance to nations that competed with U.S. agriculture. By buying up rice from an underdeveloped nation, a commodity the United States held in surplus and refused to purchase, the Soviets made inroads while U.S. prestige was hurt. The State Department correctly believed such non-competition policies raised "doubts as to [the United States'] real intentions in giving aid." Another problem was that too often U.S. aid was not beneficial to the population and was viewed by many as aiding the wealthy. Many of these issues were at least partially due to U.S. "procedural complexities," bureaucracy, and rules that offended recipient countries.³⁴

It became increasingly important to conjure ways to overcome Soviet success. The State Department suggested a renewed emphasis on the goals of foreign aid. Further, beliefs such as those suggested by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Howard Jones that "whether we like it or not, we are in the midst of economic warfare" emphasized the need to remain steadfast in the struggle against communist expansion.³⁵ The administration believed the U.S. should "not outbid but outperform" the Soviet programs in an effort to garner the popular support of the recipient nation. Beyond better propaganda, the aid program had to become more

³⁴ *FRUS, Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 134-135. "Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Economic Affairs (Jones) to the Special Assistant to the President (Randall), Washington, November 20, 1956."

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 134. "Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Economic Affairs (Jones) to the Special Assistant to the President (Randall), Washington, November 20, 1956." As quoted, "and the entire aid program should, in my opinion, recognize this...U.S. policy objectives...may be summarized as follows: to curb the power and prevent the expansion of international Communism and increase the strength and expand the influence of free world countries."

flexible in its ability to assess and respond quickly and effectively. By so doing, the United States could maintain the foreign aid program as a “major cold war weapon.”³⁶

As a result, agricultural surpluses became a sort of weapon. One recommendation aimed at increasing private investment and “strengthening the areas against Soviet penetration” involved the use of agricultural surpluses.³⁷ The Working Group of the Subcommittee on Soviet Economic Penetration suggested that it was important to “maximize the economic benefits of surplus agricultural disposal programs for underdeveloped areas” while minimizing the negative effects.³⁸ However, other groups, such as the Fairless Committee (chaired by Benjamin F. Fairless and made up of advisers to the President on the Mutual Security Program), felt differently and recommended “a return to sound commercial marketing procedure in the disposal of surpluses of agricultural commodities.”³⁹ The committee also contended that the disposal of agricultural surpluses should be kept separate from foreign assistance activities.⁴⁰ Such a move was not approved by the Departments of State and Agriculture, as they continued to view agricultural surpluses as a valuable tool of foreign policy. In response to the Fairless proposal, the State Department

³⁶ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 134-137.

³⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 49-50. In the “Report by the Working Group of the Subcommittee on Soviet Economic Penetration, Washington, March 11, 1957,” in section IV, item b., the committee recommended the actions: “1. Seek to maximize the direct and indirect benefits of surplus agricultural disposal actions on the economic developments of the areas with particular emphasis on private sectors. 2. In considering surplus agricultural disposal actions, afford increased recognition to the direct and indirect adverse impact of such actions on the export markets of underdeveloped areas.”

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 50. Essentially, the report suggested a number of concepts aimed most directly at fostering private sector investment incentives, in the hope that such investments would bolster direct U.S. aid dollars.

³⁹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 118, 159. The Fairless Committee was made up of Benjamin F. Fairless (chairman), Colgate W. Darden, Richard R. Dupree, John L. Lewis, Whitelaw Reid, Walter Bedell Smith, and Jesse W. Tapp, and they served as advisers to the President on the Mutual Security Program.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* “Fairless Rec. #13,” 159-160. This recommendation would do the following: “a. eliminate local currency transactions both under Public Law 480 and Section 402 of the Mutual Security Act; b. provide for disposals for dollars only, at reduced prices, in cases where normal markets would not be disturbed; c. extend aid in the form of agricultural surpluses through appropriations in the aid program for the purchase of such commodities at world market prices from the CCC.”

countered that surpluses were important as foreign aid – as long as they did not hurt commercial sales. This position was supported by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the NSC. The basis for this pro-agricultural surplus-as-aid view stemmed from the consideration that, though surpluses could have a negative impact on foreign commercial markets, security issues overshadowed the pure economic factors suggested by Fairless. At its core, such a view substantiated agriculture's importance to the cold war.

Faced with the Soviet aid policy, the Eisenhower administration moved toward “a new emphasis on long-term economic development as a major objective of foreign policy.”⁴¹ This strategy fit within the administration's effort to rethink and reshape its foreign policy in response to the Soviet Union's less militaristic initiatives.⁴² The Eisenhower policy attempted to take a position that, regardless of the existence of a Soviet aid threat, it was in the best interest of the United States to provide foreign aid.⁴³ Further, although military assistance was required, Secretary Dulles believed that “by and large” the United States “should probably put greater emphasis on our assistance to less developed countries for their economic development, and less emphasis on military assistance.”⁴⁴

The Soviet inroads into the underdeveloped world had succeeded through aggressive aid and assistance programs as well as the export of their Russian model of

⁴¹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, IX*, 171. “In a Letter from the acting Secretary of State to the Chairman of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy (Randall), Washington, March 16, 1957.”

⁴² *Ibid.*, 171.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 181. “Memorandum of Discussion at the 320th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, April 17, 1957.”

⁴⁴ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 181-182. Dulles further stated that economic assistance needed to be planned on a long-term basis, and it should be a goal. Dulles reiterated his apprehension toward the Soviet's successful usage of the Soviet experiment and its acceptance among needy countries looking to develop quickly.

the socialist experiment and rapid industrialization.⁴⁵ The Eisenhower response sought to reinvigorate the U.S. aid program into a flexible, responsive, and efficient program aimed at garnering the attention of recipient nations' population and government. Although the total value of U.S. aid greatly outpaced Soviet aid, that disparity did little to alleviate the greater fear of Soviet aid potential.⁴⁶ At its essence, the aid battle was one waged to win the hearts and minds – and thereby the allegiance – of a recipient country. In the worldwide cold war struggle, battles for allies and influence could not be overestimated.

One of the results of Soviet aid inroads was a reformulation of U.S. economic aid policy that served not only to try to reduce the dependence on military aid and security, in accord with an overall Eisenhower New Look strategy, but also to make agricultural surpluses more important in their role as a weapon and tool of foreign policy. Because of its developmental ability, its non-military qualities, its propaganda, and lastly its cheaper cost, food was used as a powerful, benign tool of foreign policy aimed at thwarting Soviet aid efforts and winning over the affection of the recipient nation.

To Trade or Not to Trade: Two Views on Trade

While the Soviet Union began a competing foreign aid program and the United States attempted to formulate a policy to combat it, the United States continued to

⁴⁵ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 32-33. Dulles, among others, was wholly fearful of this new tactic of the Soviet Union.

⁴⁶ Joseph S. Berliner, *Soviet Economic Aid: The New Aid and Trade Policy in Underdeveloped Countries*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958). Printed in 1958, this study exemplifies the seriousness with which the West viewed Soviet aid programs.

debate whether or not to trade with the Communist bloc. Two differing views emerged: those who argued for liberal trade policies and the power of open markets and those tethered to cold war rhetoric and national security, who favored an embargo on ideological grounds. Those who held the first view – generally members of the State Department – felt strongly that attempts to limit Soviet industrial expansion were not worthwhile, as Soviet development was inevitable. Thus, they argued that the wiser course was to allow trade in order for Western interests to benefit from the inevitable Soviet growth (rather than deny the West of potentially lucrative markets). The opposing view – formulated chiefly by the Department of Defense (DOD) – held that “any delay in Soviet industrial expansion is important and valuable to U.S. security.”⁴⁷ Further, they argued that additional trade limits – rather than relaxed controls – should be administered. Due to political and security concerns, the DOD view generally prevailed especially within Congress.⁴⁸

These two views continued to compete throughout Eisenhower’s first term. Following the DOD view, the United States formulated a trade policy that attempted to impose as much damage as possible on the Communist bloc. Even so, Dulles, as well as leaders of allied nations, continued to press for a more liberal and flexible trade policy. Dulles, in particular, considered “Western trade controls a valuable

⁴⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 222. “Memorandum – From Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Davis) to Chairman of CFEP (Dodge), Washington, February 23, 1955.” And from “Memorandum of Discussion at the 254th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, July 7, 1955,” 239-240.

⁴⁸ Trudy Huskamp Peterson, *Agricultural Exports, Farm Income, and the Eisenhower Administration*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 128, 136. Peterson explains how Congressional fears and hesitance resulted in non-support of liberalized trade with the bloc.

trump card.”⁴⁹ In fact, he felt that the United States could “obtain important political concessions from the Russians by offering to relax Western controls over exports of strategic goods to the bloc by making U.S. agricultural surplus commodities available at favorable terms.”⁵⁰ At a meeting of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy (CFEP) in the fall of 1955, support was given to amending Public Law 480 for barter of government agricultural surpluses with the Soviet bloc for strategic material, but not for local currencies. Essentially, the CFEP agreed with utilizing agricultural surpluses in trade with the Soviet bloc. In a letter in January of 1956 from Francis Dodge, Chairman of the CFEP, to Under Secretary of State Herbert Hoover, Jr., Dodge disagreed with the Dulles position, saying that the Soviet bloc had more to gain from reduced trade controls than the West.

Others in the administration agreed with Dodge and were not so confident the Soviets would make concessions for relaxed trade controls or for U.S. surplus agricultural commodities.⁵¹ Despite food shortages and massive agricultural problems, the Soviet Union was limited by a lack of foreign currency. It was unable to purchase goods even if it desired to do so.⁵² Members of the State Department felt that, though U.S. agricultural surpluses would assist with collectivization in Eastern Europe, the benefits to the Soviet Union were not “of sufficient importance as to

⁴⁹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 236. “Memorandum From the Chief of the Division of Functional Intelligence (Doherty) to the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Intelligence (Armstrong), Washington, June 24, 1955.”

⁵⁰ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 236, & 263-264. “Minutes of the 28th Meeting of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, Executive Office Building, Washington, October 11, 1955, 4 p.m.”

⁵¹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 236-237. “Memorandum From the Chief of the Division of Functional Intelligence (Doherty) to the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Intelligence (Armstrong), Washington, June 24, 1955.”

⁵² Trudy Huskamp Peterson, “Sales, Surpluses, and the Soviets: A Study in Political Economy” – in *The Role of U.S. Agriculture in Foreign Policy*, edited by Richard Fraenkel, Don Hadwiger, William Browne (Praeger Publishers: New York, 1979), 58.

warrant [their] making any real political concessions.”⁵³ Essentially, the ‘carrot’ of agricultural trade would not be enough to entice the Soviet Union to make any political concessions. Although this argument plausibly refuted Dulles’s position, it also supported the reverse – namely that trade in agricultural goods was sufficiently unimportant to the Soviet Union and that it, indeed, would be wise for the United States to engage in it, regardless.

The changes in Soviet tactics concerning foreign economic aid and trade had succeeded in painting the United States as the nation wishing to maintain an “Iron Curtain” around the Soviet bloc by not reducing trade controls.⁵⁴ Disturbed by the propaganda coup, many administration officials began to feel that there was no advantage in continuing such strident trade sanctions. As trade restrictions increasingly were seen as a potential liability for the United States, inquiries were made into the tolerability of engaging in trade with the Communist bloc. In August of 1955 at a State Department meeting, a frank discussion on the possibility of trade and, in particular, trading agricultural goods with the Soviet bloc, took place.⁵⁵ The conversation regarding trade of agricultural surpluses was led by Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Samuel C. Waugh. Waugh “pointed to the magnitude of our disposal problem and suggested that the Soviet bloc was one place where we might be able to dispose of substantial quantities of our surpluses.” He also believed that the United States could sell the commodities for gold at world prices.

⁵³ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X, 237.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 106. “Memorandum From the Chief of the International Branch, Bureau of the Budget (Macy) to the Director of the Bureau (Brundage), Washington, September 4, 1956.”

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 250-254. “Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, August 11, 1955. Participants: The Secretary, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Waugh, Hollister, Merchant, Robertson, Jones, and Goodkind. Subject: Current East-West Trade problems.”

When questioned about the February 1955 Attorney General's ruling disallowing even limited trade in surplus goods, Waugh suggested the ruling be reviewed and that overall agricultural trade policy be reconsidered.⁵⁶

Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Livingston T. Merchant proposed that the United States investigate a one-time operation of trading agricultural goods with the bloc, with the stipulation that the United States could halt the operation before it could get difficult to control. However, Secretary Dulles wavered, fearing that the United States could not stop the process once it began. The meeting transcript stated that Dulles "was clear that we could cut off automobiles or machinery whenever we chose, but with agricultural surpluses," he wondered, "would we not be whetting our own appetites as well as the Russians'? Might we not be building up political pressures that we could not control?" Ultimately, Dulles "[did] not want to start something we couldn't stop." It was clear that despite potential benefits of such a move, overshadowing these benefits were concerns of security, political sentiment, and agricultural pressure – therefore making it unwise to attempt a move of liberalized trade. Although Waugh was confident that public and farm opinion could be controlled, the State Department was hesitant to act. Regardless, they continued to pursue the idea.⁵⁷

Dulles's assertion of a difference between trade in industrially produced goods, such as automobiles, and trade in agricultural goods was an interesting distinction. Judith Goldstein, a professor at Stanford University, explained in an article in

⁵⁶ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X, 250-254.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 253.

International Organization that a dichotomy existed between industrial and agricultural trade policies. Goldstein asserted that industrial trade policy migrated from a protectionist view to a liberalized stance during the 1930s; however, agricultural policies remained entrenched in protectionism. Goldstein also stated that, while manufacturing interests gradually influenced a liberalized trade policy, no collective voice for liberalized agricultural policy existed.⁵⁸ Opening trade with the bloc might awaken that voice, and Dulles was wary. Further, Dulles's remark demarcating a difference in agricultural and industrial goods was grounded deeply in U.S. trade policy. His position hinted at an attitude that Goldstein described as favoring a policy meant to "maximize a nation's self-sufficiency," which served "strategic reasons" by maintaining surplus stocks in the event of a catastrophe.⁵⁹

The Trade Wedge

Circumstances such as the continued surplus issue coupled with the threat of Soviet foreign aid mobilized the Eisenhower administration to strongly consider freer trade of agricultural goods with the Soviet bloc. In early 1956, Eisenhower asked Congress to repeal the limitations written into Public Law 480 that blocked trade of agricultural surpluses with nations behind the Iron Curtain. Alternatively, the administration also requested that the Attorney General review and possibly modify the ban on Public Law 480 trade with communist nations. The President believed that trade, no matter with whom, was beneficial in economic terms and in developing

⁵⁸ Judith Goldstein, "The Impact of Ideas on Trade Policy: The origins of U.S. Agricultural and Manufacturing Policies," *International Organization*, 43, Issue 1, (Winter, 1989): 31-33.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

relationships – ultimately strengthening peace. Eisenhower did wish to restrict trade in strategic material, but he did not see U.S. agricultural surpluses as being substantially strategic. Essentially, Eisenhower viewed the Soviet bloc as a potential market. Congress did not. Conservatives, like Republican Congressman Walter Judd of Minnesota opposed the President’s request and refused to authorize liberalized trade rules with the Soviet bloc.⁶⁰

One reason for opposition to freer trade was the belief that trade with the Soviet Union was not valuable enough to pursue. According to an NSC memo in 1956, trade with the Soviet Union and Soviet bloc did not have a great material value, nor did it promise a great potential market. The memo stated that the Soviet Union imported approximately \$2 billion worth of goods annually from 1948-1955, with only a small portion from the United States.⁶¹ U.S. agricultural exports to the entire Soviet bloc amounted to just \$2 million in 1953 (\$1.5 million of which was tobacco and wool rags), and exports increased to \$6 million in 1954, much of which was for flood relief in Eastern Europe.⁶² The Soviet Union had greatly increased food imports during the post World War II period and had become a net importer of food.⁶³ Yet, in spite of views that reduced controls could double trade, this NSC memo concluded

⁶⁰ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 183-185. “Memorandum of Discussion at the 282nd Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, April 26, 1956.” See also Peterson, “Sales, Surpluses, and the Soviets,” in *U.S. Agriculture in Foreign Policy*, 63. Peterson asserts that Congress was unwilling to approve liberalized trade outright, just as the Eisenhower administration was unwilling to push openly for trade liberalization; both were hindered by the fears of domestic political ramifications. Such opposition to trade with the Soviet bloc can be traced to World War II and the post-war era in acts such as the Decontrol Act of 1947, the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948, the Export Control Act of 1949, and the Trade Agreements Act of 1951, in which trade in commodities of a “strategic” nature were banned. Though these bans were meant for military supplies, they were extended to agricultural goods as well. Also, Peterson, *Agricultural Exports*, p. 128.

⁶¹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 347. “Memo on Discussion of 282nd Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, April 26, 1956.”

⁶² *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 114-115.

⁶³ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 346-347.

that the total amount of potential trade remained small and was not particularly enticing to the United States.⁶⁴ However, this memo stands in contrast to an article by scholar Trudy Huskamp Peterson in *U.S. Agriculture in Foreign Policy*, in which the trade figures between the fourth quarters of 1947 and 1952 were compared. That period saw a 99.7% drop in trade (from \$114,061,000 to \$319,000).⁶⁵ Clearly, there was potential for trade, and the heightened cold war had suffocated it. Peterson's figures hint not only at how difficult it was to calculate potential trade with the bloc, but also how dramatically fears of communism had influenced U.S. policy.

Further, legal hurdles, such as a February 1955 ruling by the Justice Department that disallowed Public Law 480 barter deals and sales for local currency with communist countries, limited trade even in surplus goods.⁶⁶ Thus, by the mid 1950s – due primarily to domestic political concerns and anti-communism – trade in agricultural goods with Soviet bloc nations remained a non-starter. Despite these hurdles, however, the idea continued to be discussed within the Eisenhower administration. The potential economic benefits of trade were only one aspect of the Eisenhower administration's desire for freer trade. Increasingly, the administration came to value the benefits that trade leverage could have between the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc.

⁶⁴ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 347. Dulles stated East-West trade could double by 1960; still, it would only amount to 4% of total trade.

⁶⁵ Peterson, "Sales, Surpluses, and the Soviets," in *U.S. Agriculture in Foreign Policy*, 58.

⁶⁶ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 114-115. The cabinet decided in February of 1954 not to allow sales of government-owned agricultural stocks by private traders for less than value, as it would be politically damaging domestically (housewives upset about butter price). Also, the Cabinet denied sales for cash, but allowed bartering for strategic goods (later blocked by the above February 1955 ruling). Thus, only commercial sales were allowed (of which the Soviet Union is not interested), and direct government-to-government cash sales for dollars, but this must be good for policy and not affect the world market or allies. See also Peterson, "Sales, Surpluses, and the Soviets," in *U.S. Agriculture in Foreign Policy*, 61.

The administration's frustration at not being able to capitalize on trade leverage reached a boiling point following the April 1956 Attorney General's ruling that no support existed for changing interpretations of Public Law 480 trade with the Soviet bloc. As a result, Dulles, greatly agitated, spoke to the inability of the United States to "seize and exploit" a "unique opportunity" in making in-roads with satellite countries of the Soviet Union. In Dulles's opinion, the satellites were in a precarious position, with growing unrest and displeasure with the Soviet Union. Dulles suggested that "we were now in a position to make up an attractive shopping list" which we could present to the Czechs and others, which "would raise absolute hell in the Soviet bloc."⁶⁷ These views stood in marked contrast to the timidity Dulles displayed toward opening a one-time trade opportunity in August of 1955 (see p. 15).⁶⁸ Clearly, for Dulles – as with others in the administration – there was a clear line of demarcation between open trade for trade purposes only and trade that also destabilized the Soviet bloc and provided advantages in the cold war.

Dulles further hypothesized that such an offer would force the Soviet Union to match or block the trade offer – either of which would likely further strain relations between the Soviet Union and its satellites and might even lead to a complete collapse of their relationship. Dulles lamented the inability of the United States to seize such an opportunity, hinted that Congress had never understood the problem, and hoped

⁶⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 184. "Memorandum of Discussion at the 282nd Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, April 26, 1956." After consultation with other departments, the Attorney General believed there was no demand to open trade. Even a request for sales in dollars for purchase of strategic material was denied.

⁶⁸ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 250-254. "Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, August 11, 1955." Participants: The Secretary, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Waugh, Hollister, Merchant, Robertson, Jones, and Goodkind, Foreign relations, 1955-1957, Volume Subject: Current East-West Trade problems.

that the United States could find a way to use the “vast U.S. surpluses in the interests of our national security.” In response to Dulles’s tirade, the transcript states: “The President smiled and said that it was extremely encouraging to him to have someone else make his speech for him.” The President seconded Dulles’s thoughts and called the Public Law 480 restrictions “damned foolishness.”⁶⁹

At an NSC meeting in the spring of 1956, the issue of trade with the bloc reemerged. The President mentioned going to Congress again for action, but suggested avoiding the Agriculture Committee. Instead, Eisenhower believed that the Foreign Affairs or Foreign Relations Committees would be more favorable audiences. Vice President Richard Nixon and Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr. concurred, with the Vice President adding that it would be wise to stress the foreign policy prerogative of the requested changes. The President agreed and pressed to expedite the process. He also stressed promoting to Congress that the tactic was “strictly in the context of achieving our foreign policy objectives” and that the United States was “simply dangling some carrots before the satellite governments in order to increase the strength of their pull away from the Soviet Union.”⁷⁰ The goal was clear: to utilize agricultural surplus as a wedge to splinter the cohesion of the Soviet bloc. Eisenhower

⁶⁹ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 184-185.

⁷⁰ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 331-332. “Memorandum of Discussion at the 281st Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, April 5, 1956.” A similar thought was mentioned by Dulles, as to whether shipping U.S. agricultural surpluses to Czechoslovakia might not be a wise decision, but a bureaucratic morass held up such a policy. Eisenhower then reiterated that trade restrictions should be removed and trade encouraged (331). Secretary Wilson stated that his conclusion was that the United States should either not trade with the Soviet Union or trade rather liberally (331-332). Dulles’s suggestion of selling agricultural goods to the Czechs was hindered by the ruling of the Attorney General regarding sales to Soviet bloc countries.

stated, “You can say one thing: trade is the greatest weapon in the hands of the diplomat.”⁷¹

In June of 1956, Dulles sent a letter to the Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture urging the repeal of Section 304 of Public Law 480 in order for the United States to engage in trade of surplus agricultural goods with the Soviet bloc. Dulles based his plea on the poor supply of food in Eastern Europe and the psychological effect of demonstrating the “bountiful fruits of freedom, which free nations share on a normal basis.” These proposed advances in trade were presented as temporary and could not be allowed to strengthen the military potential of the Soviet Union nor the satellites. Moreover, such trade advances were a foreign relations tactic and a means of relieving domestic surplus.⁷²

Not everyone agreed with the President’s recommendation. Members of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) felt that any trade that “improved living standards, no matter what its nature, [became] a direct contribution to military power and industrialization” of the Soviet Union.⁷³ Still, others felt that the Soviet bloc’s ability to reallocate resources constituted a legitimate reason to consider their entire economy as part of their military power.⁷⁴ To those holding these views, trade could never be disassociated from military might and, thereby, could not be considered.

⁷¹ Peterson, *Agricultural Exports*, 49.

⁷² *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 191-192. “Letter from the Secretary of State to the Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture (Cooley), Washington, June 7, 1956.”

⁷³ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 217. “Memorandum from the Chairmen of the CFEP (Dodge) to the DD or the CIA (Amory), Washington, February 7, 1955.” Dodge voiced these opinions, and Amory concurred.

⁷⁴ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 222. “Memorandum from Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Davis) to Chairman CFEP (Dodge) Washington, February 23, 1955.”

Allies Balk at Trade Controls

Those in the administration favoring reduced trade controls found friends among U.S. allies who were growing annoyed with U.S. trade policy.⁷⁵ The United States found itself under pressure from Great Britain, France, and other European and Asian allies who favored reduced trade controls. Still, despite the President's requests, the formal U.S. position remained steadfast against any weakening of trade controls. In fact, a National Intelligence Estimate downplayed this pressure by allies, reporting that those free world countries wanting reduced restrictions were motivated by "political and economic considerations not necessarily in consonance with U.S. views." The report also mentioned that Soviet propaganda had successfully played on "national sensitivities, economic problems, and aspirations" of individual countries, while painting the United States as belligerent and the Soviet Union as wanting to conduct peaceful trade and to avoid war.⁷⁶

Fueled in early 1956 by a growing sense that hostilities between the West and the Soviet bloc had abated, U.S. allies increasingly fell out of favor with the U.S. position of strict trade controls. Such pressure from allies, along with the ramifications of Soviet propaganda against U.S. trade policy, drove the Eisenhower administration to once again review its trade policy options – much as it had its economic aid program. During an NSC meeting in late January 1956, President

⁷⁵ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X, 275-276.* "Letter From the Secretary of State to the President." Along with trade issues with the Soviet bloc, increased tensions also were created in regards to easing or strengthening trade controls with communist China. Leading the effort to reduce controls were the UK, France, and Japan. All pressured for trade controls with China to be reduced to the level of the Soviet bloc. The United States balked at this. The controls, multilaterally imposed, were threatened by the United Kingdom's threat of unilateral reductions in trade controls.

⁷⁶ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X, 290-291.* "Special National Intelligence Estimate – SNIE 100-56 – Washington, January 17, 1956, Political Effects of Relaxation of Controls on Trade with Communist China."

Eisenhower called for a study to show the “net advantage or disadvantage” of U.S. trade with the Soviet bloc. “We are in a country, surrounded by a lot of surplus materials,” testified President Eisenhower, “which we would like very much to sell.”⁷⁷

The President wondered, if “there were virtually no obstacles placed in the way of trade between the Soviet bloc countries and the free world, what would this mean, in terms of dollars and cents, first, for the United States and afterwards for its major allies?” In addition, Eisenhower questioned the assumption held by Congress and others that trade obstacles hurt the Soviet cause. Instead, Eisenhower asserted that perhaps trade controls only hurt the United States and its allies by closing markets. Moreover, the President was alarmed by the insufficient data detailing this issue. When NSC members questioned his request for a “net advantage or disadvantage” study of trade with the Soviet bloc, Eisenhower angrily rebuked the Council. Eisenhower was concerned that trade controls damaged U.S. interests more than the Soviet Union’s. Further, Eisenhower viewed trade as a means of creating mutual interests and, subsequently, mutual desire for peace.⁷⁸

On January 31, 1956, in response to Eisenhower’s request, CFEP Chairmen Dodge provided the report “Gains in Trade, Expressed in Dollars, Which Might Follow from the Virtual Elimination of all Controls on Trade with the Bloc” to the NSC. The report attempted to assign a dollar amount to the full elimination of all trade controls, excluding arms and atomic energy material.⁷⁹ As such, the report

⁷⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957*, X, 302. “Memorandum of Discussion at the 274th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, January 26, 1956.”

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 303.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 314. “Memorandum From the Chairman of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy (Dodge) to the Staff Assistant to the President (Goodpaster).”

stated that the free world might increase annual trade by \$350 million. Of this total, \$150 million would be a result of loosened restrictions with China. Dodge reported that the increased trade (a potential 15% increase) “would be very small in relation to total Free World trade.”⁸⁰ Dodge stated in the memo: “Such an increase is too small to be of significant benefit to the Free World as a whole; although to a number of business firms, particularly in Japan, this improvement in trade would be important.”⁸¹ Further, the report was solidly influenced by existing U.S. policy – vis a vis the Soviet Union – and not, as the President intended, an objective reassessment of trade potential. Essentially, Eisenhower’s question about increased trade being a boon to the United States more than the Soviet Union was not fully considered.⁸²

Even though the Dodge report discounted the possible advantages the West might garner by increasing trade with the Soviet bloc, Eisenhower continued to express his desire for the removal of trade restrictions. In the President’s opinion, trade restrictions had been passed at the height of McCarthyism and its hysteria, and he felt that a “fresh look” at trade was in order.⁸³ Secretary Dulles seconded the President’s sentiment. In Dulles’s opinion, sitting on “a vast pile of ammunition in the shape of food and agricultural products” was “ridiculous.” Dulles further stated that Soviet purchases of surpluses from underdeveloped countries caused problems for the United States; he hoped that possible sales of surpluses by the United States within the

⁸⁰ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 314.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, 314-315. Dodge warned that the bloc’s focus on development would be assisted by its large natural resource base. It was likely that the bloc would increase imports of some electronic and machinery items, but Dodge felt it unlikely that – given fewer restrictions – the bloc would substantially increase trade. Dodge’s report was extremely pessimistic and appeared to avoid some of the real questions Eisenhower had asked, particularly regarding surpluses.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 333. “Memorandum of Discussion at the 281st Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, April 5, 1956.”

Soviet bloc might cause problems for the Soviet Union. The President felt that the administration had been too concerned with how Congress would feel about trade with the Soviet bloc, and Congress – moved more by domestic political considerations than by foreign policy – was unwilling to see the benefit of a reassessment of trade with the bloc.⁸⁴

Ultimately, international events abruptly halted the Eisenhower administration's efforts. As noted, by early 1956, both President Eisenhower and the State Department (Dulles, Hoover, and others) had become sympathetic toward reducing trade controls (specifically in agricultural goods) and utilizing Public Law 480 stocks as trade bait with bloc nations. Initially, domestic pressure from Congress and the DOD stymied their efforts to revise trade policy. However, just as Eisenhower and his staff seemed poised to force a change, the renewal of Soviet aggression in the fall of 1956 following the Suez crisis brought to a halt any efforts to weaken trade barriers. Sustained by the distraction of the Suez crisis, the Soviet Union put down the Hungarian revolt in the fall of 1956.⁸⁵ In one fell swoop, Soviet aggression made the increasingly untenable U.S. position of adhering to stricter trade controls tenable again. Administration members favoring strict controls were able to capitalize on these renewed fears of Soviet aggression to push for a renewal of trade controls. Ultimately, these events ended any hopes of increasing trade with communist nations.

Yet with time, the option of increased trade with the Soviet Union lingered as a possibility. In June of 1958, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev sent a letter to

⁸⁴ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 333-334.

⁸⁵ LaFeber, *America*, 185-186.

President Eisenhower requesting renewed trade between their two nations.⁸⁶ The Eisenhower administration's consideration of the letter focused on the various political repercussions such efforts would engender. The administration determined that a softening of trade controls might alienate members of the anti-communist coalition (NATO, SEATO, etc.), undermine anti-Soviet elements within the Soviet bloc, and destabilize U.S. interests in the underdeveloped world. However, these concerns were secondary to trepidation regarding domestic political consequences.⁸⁷ The anti-communist establishment remained a powerful influence in domestic politics, dissuading the administration from definitive action. As a result, Khrushchev's request did not receive a favorable response.⁸⁸

Although political pressure and administration inaction were large hurdles to overcome, studies continued to investigate the potential of relaxed trade restrictions with the bloc. A Special National Intelligence Estimate conducted in the fall of 1958 documented the effects of increased trade between the United States and the Soviet Union. In particular, the report emphasized the view expressed by many nations that increased trade would likely be interpreted as a positive easing of tensions between the two countries. Further, though the Soviet Union would benefit more from increased trade, it was not anticipated that such trade would benefit their military capacity in any significant manner. Political ramifications abroad – such as in South Korea, Nationalist China, and Japan – were viewed as the most likely significant detriment.

⁸⁶ Nikita Khrushchev, "Expansion of Trade Relations Between the United States and the Soviet Union: Letter From the Chairmen of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. (Khrushchev) to the President of the United States (Eisenhower), June 2, 1958," *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, (Washington D.C.: 1958), 846-850.

⁸⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1958-1960, IV*, 714-718. "Memorandum Prepared in the Department of State, Notes on the Expansion of US-Soviet Union Trade, June 16, 1958."

⁸⁸ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1958-1960, IV*, 716.

The report, however, made increased trade seem rather benign. Of course, the report also refrained from commenting upon domestic political concern – an important caveat.⁸⁹

Trade talk ultimately succumbed to intensified rhetoric and fears that it was undesirable to trade goods in which the West held an advantage over the Soviet Union.⁹⁰ Ultimately, cold war pressures, domestic politics, and an intensified Soviet economic aid program doomed trade opportunities with the bloc during the Eisenhower administration. In particular, trade in agricultural goods also was doomed, because food and fiber were viewed as strategic. Despite desires for freer trade, the Eisenhower administration – motivated by ideology and fear – sought to limit any potential gain the Soviet Union might attain through free trade. Limiting trade with the bloc fit into an overall containment policy, even though it contradicted basic economic principles. Security and fear prevailed over free trade...and the potential of relieving surpluses through sales to the communist world never materialized.

Conclusion

Foreign policy during the 1950s was beset by fear and apprehension. Policy and regulations were limited by McCarthyism and its resonance. As a result, trade relations with the Soviet bloc were limited in scope by political and security concerns. Such fears contradicted President Eisenhower's original emphasis on "trade not aid"

⁸⁹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1958-1960, IV*, 735-742. From "Special National Intelligence Estimate, SNIE 100-8-58, Implications of an Increase in US-Soviet Trade, October 7, 1958."

⁹⁰ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1958-1960, IV*, 48-49. "Memorandum of Conversation, June 4, 1959, between CFEP and German Minister Erhard."

and created a divergent opinion between Congress and the administration.⁹¹

Eisenhower, for one, seemed more and more interested in opening up free trade, with the exception of arms and atomic materials. This concept stood in stark contrast to many more conservative views in Congress and the DOD. The fascination of the United States with security, the fear and respect of Soviet military might, and the deterrence-containment philosophy inhibited the use of economic policy as an aggressive way of confronting the contradictions of the communist system. Instead of an offensive policy aimed at free trade to benefit domestic industries and splinter the bloc, an economic defense policy was enacted that limited trade.

These policy decisions were shrouded in fear and misunderstanding and had dramatic effects on U.S. economic policy. Although the trade possibilities with the Soviet bloc and China were unknown, such opportunities might have benefited aspects of the U.S. economy, particularly agriculture. Both the Soviet bloc and China, despite vast resources for agricultural production, were unable during the 1950s to completely fulfill their food and fiber needs and might have imported additional goods if given the opportunity. Such a market may have offered direct sale possibilities for the U.S. farmer. Further, Eisenhower, Dulles, and others felt that free trade might have highlighted the contradictions of the communist world and caused fractures in the Iron Curtain, a view in consonance with Director of the Policy Planning Staff George Kennan's original view of the Soviet system.⁹² Trade with the bloc failed because

⁹¹ Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy 1953-1961* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1982), 7.

⁹² See "X," "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947): 566-582. See also George Kennan, *American Diplomacy, Expanded Edition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984). Kennan's article

domestic political repercussions were feared. Both the real and imagined fears of the communist threat, used so effectively to harness popular support both at home and abroad, also frustrated any attempt to engage in trade with the bloc. As Trudy Huskamp Peterson noted in her article *Sales, Surpluses, and the Soviets*, “Clearly the United States, in a fit of anti-Communist self-abnegation, repeatedly ignored sales opportunities behind the Iron Curtain. . . .The losers during the embargo years were the farmers and the taxpayers. Prices could have been strengthened and storage costs reduced if substantial Soviet-bloc sales had materialized.”⁹³

The surpluses did provide the Eisenhower administration with a valuable asset in its foreign economic strategy – namely aid. As such, U.S. agricultural production increasingly moved from the blight of surplus to a valuable cold war tool. Surplus goods provided a counterweight to Soviet aid packages. However, even as the use of aid more deeply entrenched agriculture into the cold war struggle, it did little to alleviate the surplus, itself. Instead, agriculture’s entrenchment in foreign policy more clearly defined food and fiber as a strategic asset. As such, a ‘we have, you don’t, you won’t’ framework arose. This Fortress America-esqe philosophy, a hallmark of the Republican right wing, sought to make the United States independently able to sustain itself in a nuclear confrontation and fostered a ‘keep-away’ mentality that thwarted attempts to liberalize trade with the bloc.⁹⁴ Further, much like fears of missile gaps and bomber gaps, a pseudo-food gap existed in which the United States’ bounty was

compared the Soviet system to a wind-up car that would eventually run out of energy. Kennan felt that the inherent contradictions of Soviet ideology would eventually cause the Soviet system to collapse.

⁹³ Peterson, “Sales, Surpluses, and the Soviets,” in *U.S. Agriculture in Foreign Policy*, 71.

⁹⁴ Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999), 41.

held as a symbolic weapon. This food shield sought to undermine Soviet aggression – just as the nation’s nuclear weapon stockpile did. Food power was a real tool of aid and development, but perhaps more so a symbol of American might.

As a result, agriculture’s role in foreign policy was cemented during the 1950s. Though lip service was paid to reducing surpluses, the needs and fears of the cold war made such declarations ring hollow. U.S. food production was such a clear advantage, and it was perceived as such a strategic tool, that any efforts to bring agricultural policy into sound economic alignment were thwarted by cold war considerations. Efforts to reduce food surpluses via trade or policy change fell limp in the face of the surpluses’ importance as aid, development funding agent, trade lever, or – most importantly – strategic stockpile. In 1957 Bruce Johnston wrote about the United States in the journal *World Politics*, reminding that “on two occasions in our recent history accumulated stocks of agricultural commodities, which were becoming uncomfortably large, were abruptly transformed into valuable assets.” Johnston referred to surplus stocks prior to World War II and the Korean conflict and alluded to the mentality that surpluses might become a valuable asset quickly. The cold war, to some, provided impetus to maintain surplus stocks.⁹⁵ As such, the cold war and the Eisenhower administration elevated farmers into cold warriors.



⁹⁵ Bruce F. Johnston, “Farm Surpluses and Foreign Policy,” *World Politics*, Vol. 10, Issue 1 (Oct., 1957), 11.

The Food Shield

Food as a Weapon

Before the Eisenhower administration began struggling with the contradictory questions of combating Soviet foreign aid and the possibility of opening trade with the bloc in the mid-1950s, they faced the problem of agricultural surplus stockpiles. The surplus mound fueled political rancor and led to a melding of humanitarian ethos, political expedience, and pragmatism readily seen in the legislation that became the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 – or Public Law 480. Meant as a developmental program as well as a surplus reducer and market creator, the cold war elevated it to an invaluable aspect of foreign policy. Yet, it was more broadly an emblem of a chaotic agricultural policy.

Public Law 480 was passed and signed into law during the spring and summer of 1954 after a series of competing interests agreed to compromise. A wide variety of pressures from government agencies, Congress, and the farm lobby assured that the law “represented the best in legislative logrolling and buck-passing.”¹ Initially, the Eisenhower administration was confident that a solution to the surplus issue “would not be hard to secure.”² However, such simplicity was not realized. Inter-departmental squabbling, agricultural sector lobbying, and partisan politics resulted in many recommendations. Ultimately, the administration was able to draft a

¹ Peterson, *Agricultural Exports*, 33-43. Peterson offers a concise background on the formulation of Public Law 480.

² *Ibid.*, 33.

compromise bill that sampled from the rival proposals. Trudy Huskamp Peterson wrote in *Agricultural Exports, Farm Income, and the Eisenhower Administration*:

In administering Public Law 480, the administration continuously balanced conflicting objectives. The legislation was all things to all people: surplus disposal, humanitarian relief, cold war weapon, domestic farm income stabilizer.³

Ultimately, Public Law 480 failed to succeed in its intended purpose of alleviating surpluses, but, more importantly, Public Law 480 made agriculture and agricultural policy essential tools of U.S. cold war foreign policy.

Public Law 480 was born in an era of harsh cold war rhetoric and anti-communist sentiment.⁴ In addition to expanding commercial markets and reducing surpluses, Public Law 480 was promoted as a tool to assist U.S. foreign policy. This point was clearly stated in the opening wording of Public Law 480:

AN ACT

To increase the consumption of United States agricultural commodities in foreign countries, to improve foreign relations of the United States, and for other purposes.⁵

The preamble aptly spoke to the ability “to improve foreign relations” through the use of food power. Conceptions of the power of food were unmistakably found in congressional floor debates about Public Law 480. Comments such as those by Democratic Congressman Brooks Hays of Arkansas, who declared that, “with proper use, these surpluses can be made a far more potential means of combating the spread

³ Peterson, *Agricultural Exports*, 69.

⁴ The early 1950s had borne the force of McCarthyism, the Korean conflict, and a hardening of the cold war. See Gary A. Donaldson, *America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1996), 3-19, and Walter LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1996*, 8th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 1997), 99-168.

⁵ *Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954*, Public Law 480, *United States Statutes at Large*, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess. (July 10, 1954), 454.

of communism than the hydrogen bomb,” reflected the aims and hopes of food power as an asset in the cold war.⁶ Further, the comparison of food to nuclear weapons starkly testified to the paramount cold war fear and rhetoric that permeated public and private life. Undoubtedly, Public Law 480 solidified the role of agricultural surpluses as a tool of foreign policy. In so doing, agricultural policy became intrinsically entwined with U.S. foreign policy of the cold war era – with lasting ramifications.

Although Public Law 480 was promoted to farmers, agricultural interests, and the American public as a method to reduce surpluses and develop markets, it also was clearly meant to aid nations friendly to the United States. Peter Toma wrote in his book *The Politics of Food for Peace: Executive-Legislative Interaction*, “When President Eisenhower signed S. 2475 into Public Law 480 on July 10, 1954, he commented that the legislation would ‘lay the basis for a permanent expansion of our exports of agricultural products, with lasting benefits to ourselves and peoples in other lands.’”⁷ Likewise, the text of Public Law 480 explicitly stated Congress’s intention to use the law as a means of gaining leverage against the Soviet Union by limiting its implementation to “friendly nations[s]” not “dominated or controlled by . . . the world Communist movement.”⁸ Democratic Congressman Fred Marshall of Minnesota pointedly summarized the nature of Public Law 480’s potential influence prior to its passage:

“I think this bill will have a great impact upon the conduct of our policy in foreign affairs, in that food can be used as a weapon we [the

⁶ *Congressional Record*, 83rd Cong. 2nd sess., Vol. 100, part 6, (June 15, 1954):H8291.

⁷ Peter Toma, *Food for Peace*, 41.

⁸ *U.S. Statutes at Large*, July 10, 1954, 457, sec. 107.

United States] have never made use of food as a weapon as effectively as we should in this fight against the insidious effects of communism.”⁹

These statements testify to Public Law 480’s implications for American foreign policy. Though touted as a means to reduce surpluses and expand export markets, Public Law 480’s power resulted from its use of food as more than developmental and humanitarian aid. In fact, food power was used as a foreign policy weapon. This harmonized well with the Eisenhower administration’s desire to cut spending and utilize all means of deterrence. Thus, just as the Eisenhower administration backed away from full-scale conventional military engagement with the Soviet Union in its New Look policies – through the means of catastrophic, but relatively inexpensive nuclear deterrence – the use of food and economic aid presented another less expensive and less confrontational alternative. Food ultimately became an inexpensive asset in maintaining a U.S.-controlled sphere encircling and containing the communist world.¹⁰

⁹ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 100, part 6, (June 15, 1954): 8287.

¹⁰ Stephen Ambrose discusses Eisenhower’s New Look strategies in *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 127-133. See also Walter LeFeber, *America*, 153-154. For insights into the use of food as a cold war “instrument” see Mitchel B. Wallerstein, *Food for War-Food for Peace: United States Food Aid in a Global Context*, 122-129. For a discussion on containment see Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1917-1953* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 32-63.

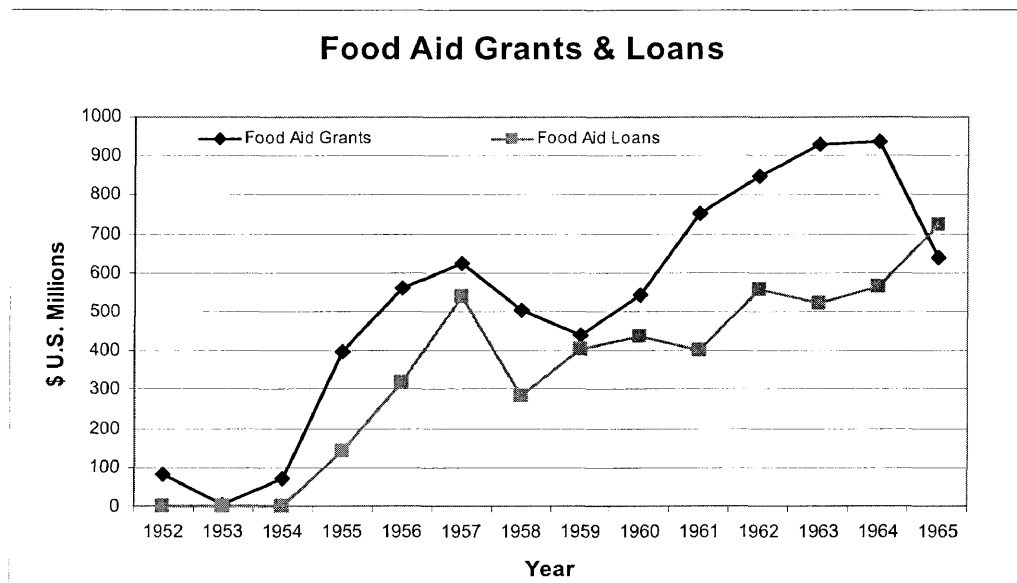


Figure 2.1: Food Aid Grants & Loans 1952-1965 (in Historic Dollars), U.S. Agency for International Development, *US Overseas Loans & Grants [Greenbook]*. Dramatic increases in food aid occurred during this heightened cold war period. See base table in Appendix, Table 2.1.

“The reawakening of Underdeveloped Nations” – Don Paarberg, Special Assistant to President Eisenhower¹¹

Public Law 480 ostensibly sought not only to reduce surpluses, but also to provide food and fiber to needy nations. However, attempting to reduce agricultural surpluses via foreign markets was complicated by two factors. First, domestic prices of many American farm products were not competitive with the lower world prices. Second, overproduction created mounting surpluses, which, if dumped, could unsettle both domestic and foreign markets.¹² The Eisenhower administration’s position stated that the surplus situation “[required] adjustments of production in other countries, as well as the United States.” Moreover, the State Department felt that instead of destabilization, the use of Public Law 480 surpluses could provide an opportunity “to

¹¹ Don Paarberg, “Food for peace: Speech to Graduate School of USDA in Washington, D.C., October 7, 1959,” *Bulletin*, 41 (November 9, 1959), 672.

¹² U.S. Department of State *Bulletin*, “Administration of Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954,” (Washington, D.C.: Office of Public Communication, Bureau of Public Affairs), October 4, 1954, 498-502 (499).

stimulate economic development in friendly countries and to strengthen their security position.”¹³

Quickly, however, it became clear that Public Law 480 was only a limited means of combating the surplus situation, as potential agreements were mired in difficulties ranging from exchange rates to shipping methods.¹⁴ Within a year of the law’s implementation, the Eisenhower administration began studying the surplus problem more broadly. The Interagency Committee on Agricultural Surplus Disposal released the Francis report (named for Chairman Clarence Francis) in October 1955. The report, also entitled *Prospects of Foreign Disposal of Agricultural Surpluses*, studied the entirety of surplus disposal questions, concerns, policies, and hindrances. The study was supposed to offer a conclusion as to the feasibility of relying on foreign markets as an effective outlet for relieving the surplus problem. The conclusion, however, was that foreign exports did not hold a great potential for achieving a large decrease in surplus levels.¹⁵ The study suggested that only through dramatic disasters would surpluses be reduced. Further, the Francis report concluded that it would take five years or more to liquidate the surpluses of wheat, cotton, and feed grains – even with 50% more exports than the 1954-55 volume.¹⁶

Despite dismissing the impact Public Law 480 and other reduction programs could render on surpluses, the Francis report did conclude that the potential to utilize

¹³ U.S. Department of State *Bulletin*, October 4, 1954, 500.

¹⁴ Peterson, *Agricultural Exports*, 59.

¹⁵ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 159-160. “Prospects of Foreign Disposal of Agricultural Surpluses.” Even though exports had increased in 1954-55 and were likely to increase in the future, only with drastic reductions in foreign production necessitating increased imports would the U.S. be able to reduce substantially its own surpluses through export markets.

¹⁶ U.S. State Department *Bulletin*, “Prospects of Foreign Disposal of Domestic Agricultural Surpluses,” Vol. 34, June 18, 1956, 1019.

agricultural surpluses in underdeveloped nations currently unable to afford U.S. agricultural goods existed. The real potential for using surpluses, according to the Francis report, was to accelerate “capital development and increase consumption programs.”¹⁷ Such use was more foreign aid than export sales and was premised on the promise of creating a future export market. Also, such a policy required an upfront commitment and an understanding that financial returns would be small in the short-term and that development would take time to accomplish.¹⁸ Despite the Francis report’s revelation that Public Law 480 would be unable to meet its goals of curbing surpluses, it did suggest that the legislation had potential as a tool of foreign policy and as an aid to development.¹⁹ The Francis report ultimately laid the foundation of policies later formulated into such programs as the Food for Peace initiative that used agricultural surpluses as investment capital.

However, some members of the administration saw the Francis report as an over-simplified plan regarding a rather complex issue. Undersecretary of State Herbert Hoover, Jr., for one, did not think that capital investments had any real chance of creating sustainable markets, but he did believe that a program of aid could be justified on humanitarian grounds. To Hoover, the report suggested that it was possible to substitute agricultural products for other forms of current foreign aid. The result would be a cost-cutting measure that would show a gross increase in total aid,

¹⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 159-160 and U.S. State Department *Bulletin* June 18, 1956, 1019.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

but a net reduction in aid expense.²⁰ Hoover's proposal, which aimed to reduce overall foreign aid expenses, was amenable to the Eisenhower administration's New Look philosophy of reducing expenses while maintaining effectiveness. Together, short-term cost reduction and long-term market development were tantalizing options for Eisenhower's foreign aid strategy. Although government assistance in the form of price supports was not favored by President Eisenhower nor Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, the concept of market development utilizing price-supported surpluses was embraced.²¹

Dumping vs. Aid

Despite being heralded as a boon to agriculture and providing hope for foreign policy and budget matters, Public Law 480 initially was unsuccessful and resented. By the time of the Eisenhower administration's first report on Public Law 480 in January of 1955, the surplus situation had worsened. Export trade had decreased 30% from 1951 to 1954, while agricultural production had increased. The result was government surplus commodity holdings worth in excess of \$6.9 billion.²² Further, whether called foreign aid or humanitarian aid, many competing foreign and domestic

²⁰ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 160-161. "Memorandum from Deputy Director of the Office of International Financial and Developmental Affairs (Turnage) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Prochnow), Washington, November, 8, 1955." Hoover used an example where current aid at 100 units could be reduced by 20% and bolstered by 100 units of agricultural products currently held by the government, resulting in a gross aid package of 180 units and a budgetary cost of only 80 units.

²¹ Sarah Shaver Hughes, "Agricultural Surpluses and American Foreign Policy 1952-1960," (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1964), 52.

²² U.S. State Department *Bulletin*, "Activities Under the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, Message from the President to the Congress," Vol. 32, January 31, 1955, 202. Production data from http://www.usda.gov/nass/graphics/data/fl_frmwk.txt & <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FarmIncome/finfidmu.htm>

interests considered Public Law 480 “surplus dumping,” or selling commodities at less than the world market price.²³

In December of 1955, a memo to Herbert Hoover, Jr. from Thorsten Kalijarvi, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, explained the political ramifications of the U.S. surplus disposal policies begun under Public Law 480. Kalijarvi pointed to the potential for communist exploitation of the resentment created by the perceived U.S. dumping policy.²⁴ In a memo from Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Walter Robertson to Hoover on December 8, 1955, Robertson explained that U.S. policy concerning rice, in particular, had pushed Burma increasingly into communist “arms,” and that other Southeast Asian countries, such as Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, were upset as well due to the perceived dumping by the United States that lowered the world market price for their export crops.²⁵

The Canadians also were critical of disposal policies. They felt the Americans were “displacing” them from the “traditional world markets” they had long cultivated.²⁶ In attempting to ameliorate the situation, Secretary Benson agreed to better consult with the Canadians about the dumping issue. But Benson also highlighted that Public Law 480 and the underlying domestic pressure to solve the surplus issue made it difficult for the United States to make necessary actions

²³ Johnston, *Farm Surpluses*, 6.

²⁴ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 164-165. “Memorandum from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Kalijarvi) to the Under Secretary of State (Hoover), Washington, December 8, 1955.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 165-167. “Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Under Secretary of State (Hoover), Washington, December 8, 1955.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 154. At a joint U.S.-Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs meeting, the Canadian delegation expressed resentment toward the U.S. disposal programs and how such actions cut into markets they had developed for selling their surpluses.

agreeable to all allies. Benson's response, asserting that domestic political pressures were more influential than allies' objections to dumping policies, fostered lasting resentment.²⁷

Indeed, through the first two years of Public Law 480 (1954-1955), the criticisms of the program were rampant.²⁸ According to Dulles, the law had left the State Department "friendless" due primarily to grain-exporting countries wanting the United States to sell less of its surplus and grain-importing countries demanding more of the less expensive U.S. excess commodities. Moreover, the program had done little to develop increased foreign markets for domestic agricultural interests, and as such, had left Congress complaining that "the Executive was too cautious."²⁹

Comparatively, in a memo at the end of December 1955, Dulles informed the President that the ongoing difficulties with Egypt concerning U.S. disposal of surplus cotton had negatively impacted U.S. relations with Egypt. As a result, Egypt had increased its contact with the Soviet bloc, at least in part as a response to its objections to U.S. cotton dumping policies.

²⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 154-155. "Current Economic Developments, Washington, D.C., October 11, 1955-1957."

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 211-212. "Letter From the Chairmen of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy (Randall) to the Acting Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Kalijarvi), Washington, November 27, 1955. Randall expressed that amendments and changes proposed to Public Law 480 should not be made, as the law itself was a bad law that needed to be completely done away with and replaced by new legislation.

²⁹ Toma, *Politics of Food for Peace*, 56, and *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 118, 120-121. "Memorandum of Discussion Between the President's Citizen Advisers on the Mutual Security Program and the Secretary of State, Washington, October 25, 1956."

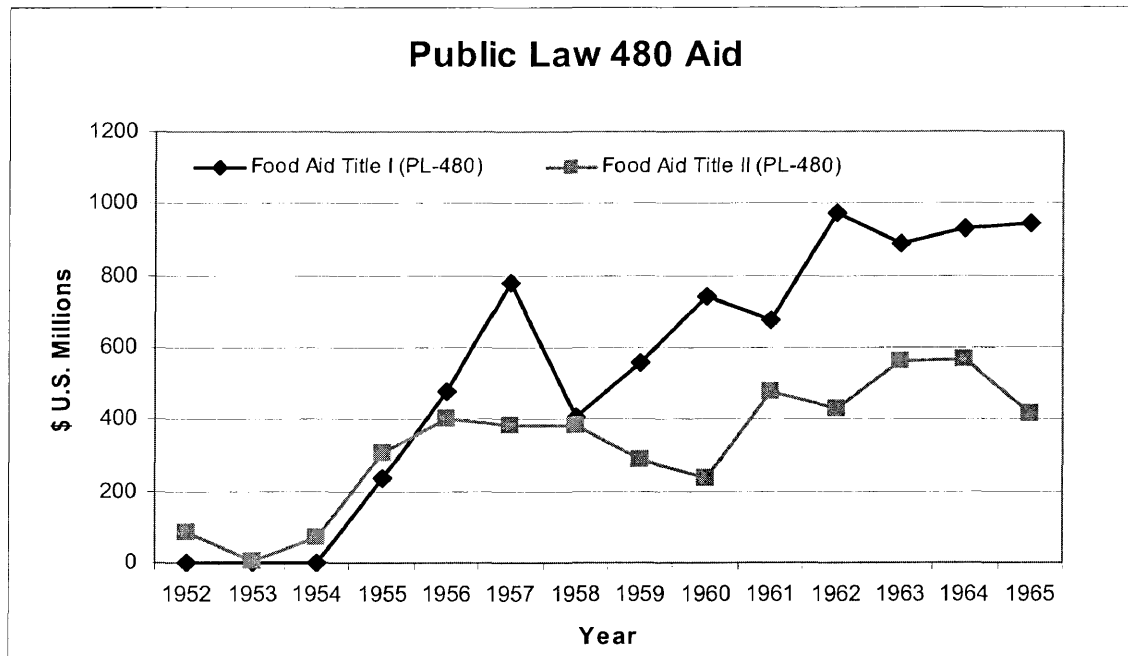


Figure 2.2: Public Law 480 Aid, 1952-1965, *U.S. Agency for International Development, US Overseas Loans & Grants [Greenbook]*. Much like food aid more generally, Public Law 480 food aid grew spectacularly from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s. See base table in Appendix, Table 2.2.

The Power of Surplus

"There is no other area which our relative strength so greatly exceeds that of the Soviet Union as in the field of agriculture. There is the opportunity to make this sector, rather than some other, a major testing ground in our rivalry, and it is clearly in our interest to do so."³⁰

Despite the growing resentment of Public Law 480 as a 'dumping' program, the Eisenhower administration increasingly found such umbrage to be far less dangerous than domestic budget pressures and national security. Fears of the expanding Soviet foreign aid programs and subsequent communist expansion trumped Public Law 480's dumping and political liabilities.³¹ In addition, the Public Law 480 program (and agricultural surplus stocks in general) became a funding mechanism free

³⁰ Don Paarlberg, "Food for Peace," *Bulletin*, 674.

³¹ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1955-1957, IX*, 167. "Memorandum From the Secretary of State (Dulles) to the President's Administrative Assistant (Hauge)."

of the Congressional oversights other forms of aid required.³² As such, Public Law 480 provided a means of aid that combated communist incursion, ostensibly strengthened recipient nation development, and theoretically eliminated surplus agricultural goods—all with far less regulation than other forms of economic aid. The success of these three aspects provided benefits that overshadowed the anger and irritation of foreign allies and domestic commercial interests and, in time, shifted the Eisenhower administration’s view of Public Law 480 from a “temporary means of disposal” to a “food for peace” program.³³ As Peter Toma wrote in his study *The Politics of Food for Peace*:

After 1956, the State Department and its foreign aid agency began to view Public Law 480 programs as a viable instrument of foreign policy. . . Two things emerge from this trend. The first is that Public Law 480 was passed originally as a domestic program for the disposal of agricultural surpluses with only peripheral foreign aid objectives. Many provisions were, therefore, included in the law which later became antithetical to the overall foreign policy objectives of the United States. Because of the broad allowance for administrative discretion in the original law, the State Department and its agencies took the initiative and transformed the operation of Public Law 480 programs into an instrument of foreign aid . . . as a result, . . . [they] did not hesitate to pay lip service to the intent of the law while at the same time instigating changes to reduce the inherent contradictions involved in using a surplus disposal program for foreign aid purposes.³⁴

Congress extended Public Law 480 legislation in 1957, 1958, and 1960, resulting in more funding for aid and assistance – an unmistakable part of the Eisenhower administration’s foreign policy. Congress, too, clearly saw the law’s perceived

³² Peterson, *Agricultural Exports*, 50-69. Peterson details the implementation of Public Law 480 involving interdepartmental conflicts and miscommunication, but also the “complete freedom from congressional pressures.”

³³ Toma, *Food for Peace*, 58.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 70-71.

success as particularly beneficial from a political standpoint by touting its record as a surplus reducer (despite the lack of actual results).

As a result, Congress, which was motivated far more by domestic pressures to cut spending and reduce surplus than by national security interests, held a positive view of Public Law 480. As Congress attacked other forms of aid funding and blocked reduced trade controls out of fear of domestic political repercussions, programs such as Public Law 480 that were palatable to constituents and the budget alike became more important to both Congress and the administration. The outcome was Congressional support for Public Law 480 because of its domestic political success and an administrative effort to use it as an aggressive part of foreign policy beyond that which initially was spelled out in the legislation.

In April, the State Department commissioned a study on how American farm surpluses could better serve foreign policy. In a letter to a Presidential assistant, Secretary Benson clearly stated that the United States should look at the surplus as a positive rather than a negative situation. He argued that, instead of “iniquitous surplus disposal,” the U.S. should promote the helpful aspects such aid could bring to foreign policy. In an interview in *U.S. News & World Report* in March of 1958, Benson iterated some of his (and the administration’s) early views of a food for peace-type of program, aimed ostensibly at feeding the world’s needy. The humanitarian aspects of the proposal were coupled with an underlying desire to develop foreign markets.³⁵ Although Benson recognized the negative political and commercial trade impact

³⁵ “Feeding the World’s Hungry: A Cure for U.S. Farm Troubles? Interview with Ezra Taft Benson,” *U.S. News & World Report* 44 (March 14, 1958): 68-72.

inherent in utilizing food aid, he nevertheless was steadfast in promoting the potential of food as a tool of foreign policy.

In particular, the efficiency of U.S. agriculture was a positive selling tool to underdeveloped nations, and it was hoped that technological assistance could provide substantial benefits to developing the underdeveloped world markets. Benson also advocated the development of other markets, particularly those within the Soviet bloc. Benson, like the President, favored development of any market available – even though this view was not supported by many hard-line, anti-communist bureaucrats.³⁶ Benson's rhetoric does not show a fundamental shift in policy; rather, his statements show an acceptance of agriculture's role in foreign policy.

By the summer of 1958, Benson advanced to the Council on Foreign Economic Policy (CFEP) the idea of calling an international conference concerning “food for peace.” Though the council felt that it was not an appropriate time for such a conference, they did agree that the use of food surpluses had foreign policy value. At this meeting, Benson clearly outlined that such a conference would assert the United States' generosity and make use of “our greatest advantage over the Soviet Union, which is in the field of Agriculture.”³⁷ In January of 1959, Eisenhower directed Benson to testify before Congress on the need to use the surpluses of the United States and other nations in efforts to support peace. The Eisenhower administration had clearly chosen to emphasize the humanitarian aspects of foreign assistance, which were recognized as invaluable propaganda tools for U.S. foreign policy. Thus, though

³⁶ “Feeding the World's Hungry,” *U.S. News & World Report*, 70-71.

³⁷ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1958-1960, IV*, 173-174. “Minutes of the 76th Meeting of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, July 8, 1958.”

the food for peace concept was indeed a feed-the-hungry-and-needy campaign, it also was a counter to Soviet aid packages.³⁸

The perceived threat of Sino-Soviet economic policy on the underdeveloped world had garnered the complete attention of the Eisenhower administration. As such, programs that could be used to confront communist aid were beneficial. Moreover, as previously indicated, a food for peace program contrasted with U.S. aid programs tied more directly to military arrangements.³⁹ As a result, Public Law 480 was rebranded from a surplus reduction program to a food for peace humanitarian endeavor. Despite the rhetoric, the contradictions of Public Law 480 remained.

In testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture in July of 1959, Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs Thomas C. Mann testified to the contradictions of surplus disposal and its growing part in U.S. foreign policy. Mann relayed that, although the program provided food to the recipient nation and created a market for surplus goods, it also frequently hindered the self-sufficiency efforts of the host country and cannibalized commercial domestic and allied exports.⁴⁰ U.S. policy had long attempted to balance between these two positions. Increasingly, however, agricultural surpluses were used as both carrot and stick, so to speak. If a country were in need, the food could be a boon; likewise, U.S. commodities could be withheld if that country did not meet U.S. terms.

³⁸ *FRUS: Foreign Economic Policy 1958-1960, IV*, 194-195. "Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Australia, February 9, 1959, 9:15 p.m." The telegram sent by Dulles has enclosed the text of a letter from Eisenhower to Benson. The Eisenhower administration became increasingly dependent on aid as a strategy of foreign policy. Thus, Benson was directed to lead the effort to organize a food for peace project in close cooperation with the Department of State as well as allied nations.

³⁹ *FRUS: Foreign Aid 1955-1957, X*, 28-30.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State *Bulletin*, "Department's Views on Administration of Public Law 480," Vol. 41, August 10, 1959, 212-215.

Moreover, the United States could use its agricultural might to influence world market prices. As such, Mann stated, “At times, market stability and the attitudes of other exporting nations are governed not so much by what we actually do in administering our disposal program but what they fear we might do.” Though it was the United States’ responsibility to act in a sound manner, Mann stressed that the threat of market manipulation could not be overlooked as a valuable tool of foreign policy. As Mann concluded, “Public Law 480 has, on balance, made a constructive contribution to our foreign policy as well as our national objectives. It can continue to do so if we continue to administer it in such a way as to serve our broad interests and those of the free world.”⁴¹ Mann’s comments revealed that, beneath the rhetoric of food for peace and humanitarian aid, the program remained an important lever for U.S. interests. The food for peace plan, though certainly meant to help those in need and to develop a more interconnected world, also was meant to promote U.S. values and interests. It was not merely an altruistic vehicle for the distribution of food surplus.

A speech by Don Paarlberg, Special Assistant to the President, highlighted the dynamic nature of food aid in foreign policy. According to Paarlberg, agriculture had entered the “international age,” and food aid served as a catalyst in “the reawakening of Underdeveloped Nations.” Despite Paarlberg’s eloquent flourish, he went on to describe the real impetus beyond food aid, which was to stake out positions of geopolitical significance against the Soviet menace. Paarlberg stated:

⁴¹ U.S. Department of State *Bulletin*, August 10, 1959, 212-215.

Not simply do the people in the less developed countries aspire to economic advancement; also there is intense and growing rivalry between the free world and the Communist bloc in assisting these people to attain the goals to which they aspire and, in the case of the Communist effort, some additional goals to which the people do not aspire. This rivalry springs from the fact that many governments in the less developed parts of the world, in their pursuit of economic betterment, hesitate between the free and the authoritarian route.⁴²

Clearly, according to Paarlberg, the direct confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in post World War II Europe had, by the late fifties, shifted to “less developed areas.” The rivalry was not so much intended to assist underdeveloped nations in attaining “goals to which they aspire,” but rather to construct linkage to a particular “sphere of influence.” In fact, Paarlberg related that “most people would agree that this form of rivalry is superior to an arms race. But let us not be deluded. It is a more subtle, softer, longer range, but no less meaningful contest.”⁴³ In spite of Paarlberg’s effort to promote a humanitarian program of food aid, his words instead hint at the growing economic and military game of Monopoly™ between the United States and the Soviet Union, in which the underdeveloped world merely became properties on the game board. Public Law 480-Food for Peace, and agricultural aid, more generally, was a means to secure assets for the United States.

Indeed, the rivalry of giving economic aid to the underdeveloped world – though not as dramatic as the arms race – was a very relevant aspect of the cold war. Although preferable to an arms race in terms of potential catastrophe, it was no less exploitative of peoples and nations in the race for geopolitical advantage due to the

⁴² *Bulletin*, November 9, 1959, 672-673.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 673.

destabilizing influence on domestic economies and the dependencies it created. Faced with concerns over budget, the Eisenhower administration looked to alternative methods of battling Soviet aggression. Agricultural surpluses were one alternative. Although passed initially as a means of assisting with the reduction of surplus agricultural goods, Public Law 480 evolved under the influence of the cold war atmosphere of the 1950s. Eventually, the Eisenhower administration realized the benefits of agricultural aid as a tool of foreign policy and moved to fully exercise this advantage over the Soviet Union. As a result, both domestic politics and the impetus to greatly change the overproduction and subsidization issues within U.S. agriculture became secondary concerns to national security interests.

Conclusion

From the beginning, Public Law 480 suffered from the existence of inherent contradictions. First, Congress hoped to maintain farm income and bring crop production in line with demand. However, this only was possible if market prices increased or farmers raised less. Politically, increasing commodity market prices (and, in turn, the price of food) was not a favorable option to politicians from larger urban and suburban areas. Moreover, decreasing production likely required the removal of labor from agriculture—a concept unpalatable to many in Congress and the nation.⁴⁴ Essentially, because of these concerns, it became next to impossible to maintain farm income without government support. In addition, the term “disposal” had detrimental

⁴⁴ Willard W. Cochrane and C. Ford Runge, *Reforming Farm Policy: Toward a National Agenda*, (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1992), 27. Cochrane and Runge stated that misconceptions about farming and rural life and desires to “save the family farm” contributed to the inability of urban representatives in Congress to construct meaningful legislation. See also Toma, *Food for Peace*, 1-7 for an overview of Congressional hesitance of reducing farm labor.

connotations to commercial interests and allies and hindered the effort to foster export markets. Although the text of Public Law 480 avoids the term “disposal,” both Congress and the rest of the world saw the policy as a means of disposing of U.S. commodities by exploiting world demand.⁴⁵ Other exporting nations decried the perceived U.S. intent to discharge its agricultural surpluses as creating a glut on the world market. Contrary to the goal of creating and building foreign friendships, the ‘benefits’ of using U.S. surpluses through Public Law 480, in fact, undercut some U.S. interests.⁴⁶

Likewise, using Public Law 480 to stimulate export market demand was misguided by humanitarian sympathies that focused on the idea that the United States had an abundance of food while other places in the world were hungry. However, this notion failed to fully consider that the hungry of the world could not afford to purchase these American foodstuffs at market prices.⁴⁷ Despite the popular belief in the United States’ duty to feed the hungry of the world, humanitarian aid, itself, did little to expand commercial export markets and certainly did not maintain farm income.⁴⁸ In the end, Public Law 480, like the agricultural policy of which it was a

⁴⁵ See Robert L. Paarlberg, *Food Trade and Foreign Policy: India, the Soviet Union, and the United States*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 109-111. Paarlberg noted that Public Law 480 caused “displeasure . . . among other agricultural exporters, including some important U.S. security allies.” Further, Congress was unable to dispose of foreign currency proceeds.

⁴⁶ See Paarlberg, *Food Trade and Foreign Policy*, 111, as well as Peterson, *Agricultural Exports*, 91.

⁴⁷ Frances Moore Lappe, Joseph Collins and David Kinley, *Aid as Obstacle: Twenty Questions about our Foreign Aid and the Hungry* (San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1980) 9-14. Lappe, Collins, and Kinley provided a quick overview of why food aid failed, namely because the needy lacked power. As a result, aid tended to hurt as much as it helped by maintaining a power relationship in which the needy were unable to overcome.

⁴⁸ See floor debates in *Congressional Record*, 83rd Congress., Vol. 100, part. 6, June 15, 1954. Paarlberg, *Food Trade*, 109. Paarlberg explained that many aid markets never developed into dollar markets; instead, markets in Eastern Europe banned from Public Law 480 sales did become dollar markets. Also, Norval Matzner, interview, 20 November 2001 and Dan Anderson, questionnaire by author, Balaton, MN and Williamsburg, VA 16 December 2001. Both Matzner and Anderson attested in interviews that many farmers were strong proponents of the American ability to feed the hungry of the world.

part, failed to have any meaningful effect on U.S. agricultural surpluses because it had no way of addressing the root problem – overproduction.

In spite of criticism from allies and bureaucrats, Public Law 480 did lay the foundation for agriculture to become a very integral part of foreign policy and influenced U.S. agricultural policy in important ways. Ultimately, difficulties in Public Law 480 administration, criticism from allies, and failed surplus reduction were outweighed by the aid flexibility Public Law 480 provided. And more importantly, the surpluses, themselves, represented a symbol of U.S. power that aided national security. Food could be used as a trade lever, a diplomatic lever, a humanitarian gift, a developmental loan – all of which were valuable – but the insurance of the surplus stockpile in the cold war was, in the end, indispensable.



Specters, Subsidies, Surpluses, and Bleeder Valves

The Hardship of Bounty

American grain farmers in the 1950s were confronted with a number of pressures. Despite price supports and subsidies, farmers remained caught in a cost-price squeeze: low crop prices and rising production costs.¹ Increased government regulation in the form of subsidies and quotas left farmers wondering what had happened to the concept of a free market. In addition, a technological revolution involving improved farming methods, genetic and other scientific breakthroughs, and efficiencies of machinery and power was in full progress.² Neither were farmers immune from the fears of the Soviet Union, communism, and nuclear Armageddon. Just as the post-World War II era and the cold war changed American social, economic, and political life, so too did it come to have ever-greater influence over American agriculture. It is plain to see that agriculture (and thereby, farmers) were an increasingly important part of foreign policy during the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, it is less clear how farmers viewed their role in the cold war struggle given the many other pressures they faced.

Following the catastrophe of the Depression and the Dust Bowl, American agriculture met the challenge and mammoth demand necessitated by World War II.

¹ “Are Farmers Really Going Broke?” *U.S. News & World Report*, 40 (March 16 1956): 146. Article details the pressures of increased debt. See also “Who is Hurting Most and Why?” *Farm Journal*, 80, (April 1956): 18. Article explains that total farm income is down 5%, and prices down, as well. Further, increased costs (gas from \$0.19 to \$0.215, tractors \$2450 to \$3600) exacerbate the problem (23). Another source is “Farmers—Everyone’s Headache Again” *Business Week*, (July 18, 1953): 29.

² Cochrane and Runge, *Reforming*, 3. See also “Harvest More Corn,” *Farm Journal*, 77 (September 1953): 32-33. Also, Don Paarlberg and Philip Paarlberg, *The Agricultural Revolution of the 20th Century*. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 2000), xv, 22-26, 44. Discussions ranging from DNA to rural electrification to soil conservation to machinery innovations are covered in this work.

Buoyed by the virtually unlimited needs of world war, American farmers and the agricultural industry as a whole brought to bear the technological sophistication and human effort that in no small way helped propel the allies to victory.³ Demand for agricultural goods after World War II subsided only briefly; soon, calls to support and rebuild Europe and Asia reignited demand for U.S. agricultural production. By late 1948, demand was decreasing, but the pressures of World War II and the initial post-war reconstruction had primed an agricultural engine not easily throttled back.⁴ Despite renewed demand due to the Korean conflict, by 1952-1953 overproduction and the surplus it created once again became political and budgetary issues – with farmers taking no small measure of the public blame.⁵

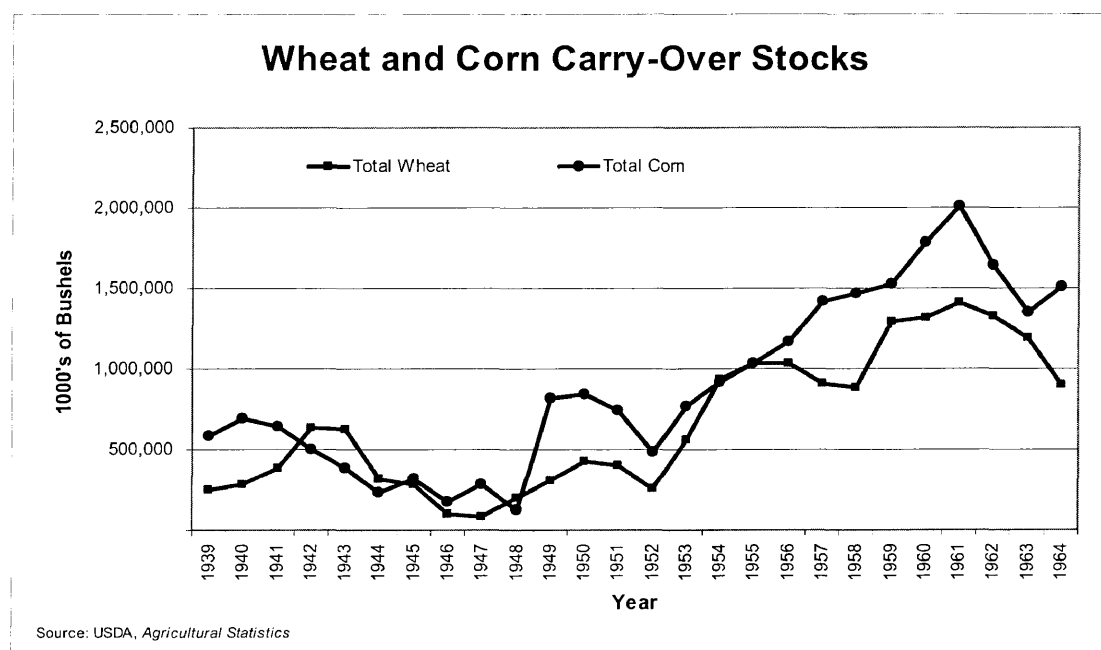


Figure 3.1: Wheat and Corn Carry-Over Stocks by year 1939-1964, USDA, *Agricultural Statistics*. Between 1950 and 1960 corn surplus stocks increased 111% and wheat 210%. See Appendix Table 3.1 for detail.

³ Johnston, *Farm Surpluses*, 11.

⁴ "Prices Down, Down: Midwest Apprehension," *Newsweek*, 41 (February 23 1953): 24-26, 99.

⁵ "High Costs, Low Prices," *Newsweek* 68 (June 22 1953): 68. "The longtime acceptance of the theory that whatever problem the farmer has he can look to the government to solve it." Also see Toma, *Food for Peace*, 7. The "general public objected to being forced to subsidize agriculture for 'useless' production."

However, while concerns over the United States' cornucopia of food reached a feverish pitch, the growing "specter of communism" fueled an atmosphere in which the policies responsible for the surplus problem were subtly continued.⁶ Even while politicians and pundits denounced agricultural policy and farmer subsidization, farmers were pressured daily by U.S. agricultural policy and the agricultural industry to continue a trend toward bigger, better, faster, and more efficient farms and farm technologies. From government-sponsored research and publications promoting the need to "Break Through Ceilings" and "[Breed] Better Hogs" to industry news emphasizing "harvest more, quickly" to industrial marketing presenting the need for the power, speed, and efficiency of the newest and best farm equipment, farmers were confronted on all fronts with the need to expand and improve their farm operations.⁷

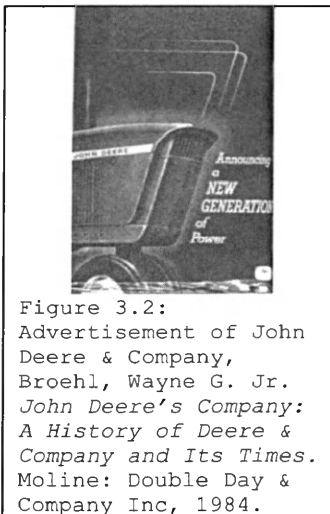


Figure 3.2:
Advertisement of John Deere & Company, Broehl, Wayne G. Jr. *John Deere's Company: A History of Deere & Company and Its Times*. Moline: Double Day & Company Inc, 1984.

Many farmers chose to increase their debt in order to meet these demands.⁸ In the end, these pressures played a supporting role in fueling an era of hyper-competitiveness. All the while, cold war concerns and divided opinions hindered an effective adjustment to agricultural policy in order to curb production. In the end, the cold war substantiated the historic policy of agricultural subsidization

⁶ See Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1917-1953*. The title of Leffler's study speaks to the fear of communism in the United States.

⁷ Toma, *Food for Peace*, 15. Also, R. Anderson, "Harvest More Corn," *Farm Journal*, 77 (September 1 1953): 32-33. "We Must Break Through Ceilings" (production ceilings), "Our Cows are Heftier Today," and "A Plan for Breeding Better Hogs," *Agricultural Research*, January-February 1953, 3; August 1955, 13; March 1957, 13. See *John Deere Day 1959/60*, produced by John Deere & Co. directed by Ried H. Ray, 97 min., John Deere Films, 1991, videocassette.

⁸ "Are Farmer's Really Going Broke?" *U.S. News & World Report*, 40 (March 16 1956): 146. "Farmers owe close to 10 billion dollars in loans for such things as equipment, seed, fertilizer, and personal needs. That is more than double the figure for 1940."

that has grown into a welfare system for agriculture still in existence today.

Within this pressure-filled environment to produce more, more efficiently, the viewpoint of the individual farmers takes on added importance. There is an abundance of information regarding agricultural policy during the cold war – with disparate viewpoints. Much of this information focuses on the views of leaders in government, agricultural organizations, and agri-business. Amidst this cacophony, the voice of individual family farmers often is drowned out.⁹ Farm magazines and newspaper publications provide some interviews, polls, and statistics regarding farmers' views, but frequently they seem to address specific questions or are the expressions of only one or two producers. In order to garner a more well-rounded understanding of how the cold war affected farmers, it becomes necessary to accumulate some documentation from farmers, themselves. Obviously, this effort is fraught with some difficulty, and such a sampling has the usual impediments of memory, subjectivity, and age. Farmers of this generation are growing fewer each day. Thus, for the purposes of providing additional understanding of farming during the cold war and the view of the cold war's effect on farming, a brief survey of farmers and rural businessmen in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota was conducted.¹⁰ The goal of the survey was simply to lend a farmer's voice to the issues

⁹ See Bruce Field, *Harvest of Dissent: The National Farmers Union and the Early Cold War*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 145-160, for a discussion of regional disputes in the National Farmer's Unions. Also Hughes, "Agricultural Surpluses and American Foreign Policy 1952-1960," 14-19, examines the divergent views within the American Farm Bureau Federation.

¹⁰ This four-state region was chosen because of its statistical abnormalities as well as a personal connection. Another reason, as written in Cochran and Runge, *Reforming Farm Policy*, 20, was the quote that the "upper Midwest is a blank on the mental maps of most Americans." The forty farmers surveyed were selected from suggestions made by personal contacts in these area.

of surplus, confused agricultural policy, and the cold war.¹¹ (Further detail on the survey, hereafter referred to as *Farm Survey*, can be found in the Appendix page 80.)

Food Shield

American life changed dramatically after World War II. Growing prosperity, technological conveniences such as television and airline travel, and an interstate highway system were just a few of the factors transforming American society in dramatic ways. Despite such progress, growing urban populations, as well as their rural counterparts, were confronted with the same communist fears and suspicions. Bomb shelters, nuclear fall-out, and McCarthyism permeated American life, causing varying, yet unmistakable effects. Americans of all classes felt the influences of the cold war throughout their daily existence.

The tensions on the fabric of American life during the cold war have been the grounds for studies such as Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound* and for memoirs such as David Beers's *Blue Sky Dream*. Both works emphasized the cold war's far-reaching bearing on not just lives, but also American life. May investigated how the cold war touched family life, gender roles, and social norms throughout America.¹²

Beers reflected on his adult realization that the "perfect" American childhood was

¹¹ See *Farm Survey*, Appendix, p. 80.

¹² See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988). May's work based on first-hand interviews and research surveys (particularly the "Kelly Longitudinal Survey") detailed the dysfunction and vicissitudes of American families during the 1950s. Collective cold war societal fears demanded strong families willing to stay together in a metaphoric example of security against communist perversion. Under this shroud of familial containment, however, hid a host of problems that often later erupted. According to May, the cold war promoted a reversion in familial life to much stricter gender roles, wiping away a tide of feminist progress from the 1920s, 1930s, and World War II. May asserted that a strong family, utilizing a form of "domestic containment," that involved clear gender roles as well as a clear husband-wife-child hierarchy, could avoid the pitfalls of communist subversion such as homosexual behavior, sexual perversion, and non-conformity. Cold war anxieties promoted these "strategies" of home-life security.

very much a product of the cold war. Beers realized that the aerospace industry (by which his father was employed) was essentially an industry surviving from a U.S. military-funded welfare program.¹³ Both works highlighted the depth to which 1950s America was held captive by the United States' ever-present standoff with the communist world. And, farmers and their families were not immune to these pressures.

Although Beers's depiction of a government-subsidized aerospace program may appear to have little in common with the agricultural industry, in fact, such subsidization was very comparable to the support programs constructed for the American farmer. Just as the government subsidization of the aerospace industry existed in order to battle the Soviet Union's air and space endeavors, so too did the support program for farmers seek to defeat communist agricultural production. While the aerospace industry created missiles, farmers raised food. But, in the cold war, both were vitally important weapons.

Likewise, just as the aerospace and technology industries constructed an overabundance of weaponry and a nuclear arsenal that could destroy the world many times over, the agricultural industry grew an overabundance of food to feed the nation and the world's needy. In both cases, the government subsidized overproduction as a symbol of America's bounty and power. Surpluses, whether of weaponry or food, represented the symbols of power deemed necessary to confront, intimidate, and contain the Soviet Union. This armaments race fueled the need to become bigger,

¹³ David Beers, *Blue Sky Dream: A Memoir of America's Fall from Grace* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996).

better, and faster – not only in the aerospace industry, but also in the farming industry. Thus, just as the military-industrial complex sustained the defense and aerospace industry, U.S. agriculture subsisted through a similar, if unnamed, military-agricultural complex of its own. Moreover, both epitomized a state-supported welfare system that was fueled by the fear of communism and the perceived need to project U.S. power at any cost.

The thought of the American farmer on the government ‘dole’ may seem offensive to farmers and quite possibly Americans in general.¹⁴ Indeed, the idea of a welfare system for agriculture is a difficult subject to broach with a farmer. However, when asked, *Farm Survey* respondents’ frustration with agricultural policy resonated with the following statement: “U.S. agricultural policy essentially has created a support system farmers have become dependent upon for survival.” Eighty-six percent of farmers felt that, indeed, agricultural policy had made them dependent on subsidies.¹⁵ Even farmers recognized their own dependency on agricultural policy, but did they see a connection to the cold war?

As noted, 1950s America was indelibly marked by the cold war. American power and prestige around the world reached levels heretofore unknown, leaving some to suggest the late 1950s represented the height of American hegemony.¹⁶ Whether

¹⁴ Ingolf Vogeler, *The Myth of the Family Farm: Agribusiness Dominance of U.S. Agriculture* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), 3-6. Vogeler studied the myth of the family farm and documents the social and political acceptance of the family farm ideal. Vogeler related that the “appeal of the family farm has become stronger as the number of farms has decreased.” See also Toma, *Food for Peace*, 1-7. The whimsical fascination with the American independent farmer as a symbol of American freedom, ingenuity, work ethic, and liberty was examined by Toma in his book on the Food for Peace program.

¹⁵ *Farm Survey*, Question 28, “Do you agree with statement: ‘U.S. agricultural policy essentially has created a support system farmers have become dependent upon for survival.’”

¹⁶ Thomas McCormick, *America’s Half Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 125. McCormick’s definition of hegemony focused on the

intended or not, America's wielding of hegemonic power increasingly led to policies that were imperial in spirit, if not in word. The power of America as an imperial nation was unleashed in a variety of ways. Covert operations, police actions, military interventions, political subversion, and food aid were all parts of an increasingly complex set of tools available to 'improve' our foreign interests. The use of food as a deterrent and developmental tool within U.S. foreign policy was solidified during the 1950s. Hence, an attempt to understand farmers' perceptions of their role as foreign policy assets, heretofore rarely documented, is important in framing a full-scale view of cold war policy.

“Get big or get out” – Earl Butz, former Secretary of Agriculture¹⁷

The lasting effects of this era of policy dysfunction can be seen most readily in the increased specialization of farms, the ever-expanding individual farm size, and the ever-decreasing number of farmers.¹⁸ At its essence, agricultural policy's welfare system acted like a bleeder valve for U.S. agriculture. By slowly culling the least efficient (and generally the smallest) farmers from the agricultural labor pool, U.S. policy gradually moved the excess labor out of the agricultural sector. But the policy did not limit production; it only increased it! Although reductions in farm labor may have been necessary in order to eliminate surplus production, U.S. agricultural policy was hardly motivated toward balancing production with demand. Instead, U.S.

world market system in which the U.S. was a participant. According to McCormick, by the late 1950s the United States was able to use its power to “realize some approximation of its preferred world order.”

¹⁷ Cochrane and Runge, *Reforming Farm Policy*, 21. Comment attributed to Earl Butz, President Nixon's Secretary of Agriculture.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4. This is defined by Cochrane and Runge as “resource concentration.”

agricultural policy did little to hinder run-away production. Ultimately, misguided and outdated agricultural policy fostered increased farmer dependence on subsidization and made farming a more capital-intensive industry. Moreover, the farm industry shifted to increasingly specialized agricultural production. Likewise, *Farm Survey* responses consistently pointed to the pressure to expand, which greatly influenced the move toward specialization. In fact, more than 80% of survey respondents answered affirmatively to a question asking specifically if farmers had become more dependent on fewer crops.¹⁹

In the 1950s, the concerns of overproduction, low farm income, and rising cost – the “cost-price squeeze” – existed throughout agricultural and political discourse. In comparison to the overall U.S. economy, which was growing robustly, the farm sector was lagging well behind.²⁰ In 1956 *Farm Journal* published an article detailing the problems faced by farmers. Small farmers, in particular, were feeling pinched. One reason for apprehension was the increasing cost of farming. Despite rising production, profitability was lagging. One particularly telling quote stated: “We buy our living on farms today. Twenty-five years ago our dads used to produce it right on the farm.” The quote expressed the increased dependence on processed food and goods, new equipment, and financing rather than self-sufficient production.²¹ The nature of farming had changed from diverse and self-sufficient farms to a non-diverse, specialist industry.

¹⁹ *Farm Survey*, Question 7, “Do you think farmers have become more dependent on fewer crops or livestock in the last half-century?” Based on 19 of 23 responses to the question (unanswered responses were not counted).

²⁰ John Bird, “Our Out-of-Balance Agriculture,” *Country Gentleman*, 123 (December 1953): 23, 54-57. Bird examined the issues associated with the floundering agricultural situation.

²¹ “Who is Hurting Most and Why?” *Farm Journal*, 80 (April 1956): 22-23.

Comparison of Principle Crops														
Average 1941-50 to Average 1951-60, 11 principle crops of IA, MN, NE, & SD														
Average Acres planted 1941-1950 (in Thousands of acres)														
	Wheat	Rye	Buck-wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Sorghum (all)	Sugar Beets	Flax-seed	Soy-beans	Hay, all	Total (11 crops)	% of 59 Principle crops	Total 59 Principle Crops*
U.S. Total	50,308	4,412	417	88,379	43,968	13,986	14,357	833	4,283	13,655	74,536	309,134	89.7%	344,756
Iowa	208	14	-	10,629	5,691	68	26	3	150	1,766	3,420	21,995	6.4%	
Minnesota	1,182	171	42	5,386	4,834	1,150	17	39	1,392	654	4,257	19,124	5.5%	
Nebraska	3,540	329	-	7,737	2,428	1,708	585	62	-	37	4,216	20,642	6.0%	
South Dakota	3,323	73	4	3,826	3,014	1,060	468	7	503	29	3,694	16,001	4.8%	
Total IA, MN, NE, SD	8,253	587	46	27,578	15,967	3,986	1,096	110	2,045	2,506	15,587	77,761	22.8%	
Average Acres planted 1951-1960 (in Thousands of acres)														
	wheat	rye	Buck-wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Sorghum (all)	Sugar Beets	Flax-seed	Soy-beans	Hay, all	Total (11 crops)	% of 59 Principle crops	Total 59 Principle Crops*
U.S. Total	63,509	4,104	136	79,901	41,136	14,034	17,644	865	4,525	20,536	72,216	318,606	97.5%	326,844
Iowa	165	36	-	10,977	5,563	26	117	1	25	2,280	3,772	22,962	7.0%	
Minnesota	900	122	-	5,924	4,639	1,074	-	71	900	2,090	3,722	19,442	5.9%	
Nebraska	3,812	281	-	6,513	2,902	263	1,180	62	-	148	5,265	19,526	6.0%	
South Dakota	2,970	302	-	4,084	3,492	595	240	5	732	160	5,190	17,771	5.4%	
Total IA, MN, NE, SD	7,847	741	-	27,499	15,696	1,958	1,537	139	1,657	4,678	17,949	79,701	24.4%	

Source: USDA, *Agricultural Statistics*, 1936-1965
* Includes the 59 principle crops planted within the United State

Figure 3.4 Comparison of Principle U.S. Crops, Average 1941-1950 to Average 1951-60, USDA, *Agricultural Statistics*. Despite an overall decrease in planted acres, the percentage share of the 59 principle crops increased from 89.7% to 97.5%, evidence of the reliance upon fewer crops nationwide.

Another concern was the need to expand to stay competitive, and, thereby, the underlying intensive capital investment necessary to do so.²² To meet capital requirements, or just to survive, some farmers took second jobs off the farm in order to augment their farm income. Others opted for debt and financed their expansion (see Figure 3.5). A wheat farmer described the need to expand by stating: “I was farming only 500 acres when this thing started but I jumped it to 1,200. High prices may encourage me to grow more bushels but low prices force me to grow ‘em.”²³ Indeed, many farmers attempted to overcome low prices by increasing production. In fact, 78% of *Farm Survey* respondents answered that they remembered large agribusiness entities and the USDA promoting products and technology aimed at increasing

²² “Who is Hurting Most and Why,” *Farm Journal*, 22-23.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23.

productivity and yields.²⁴ Expansion of cultivated acres was the easiest means of doing so. In addition to outright expansion, the onset of better fertilizer, farm techniques, and hybrids made it possible to raise more on fewer acres. Or, a farmer could shift acres into production of another subsidized crop. Ultimately, such decisions further fueled the cycle of overproduction and lower prices.²⁵

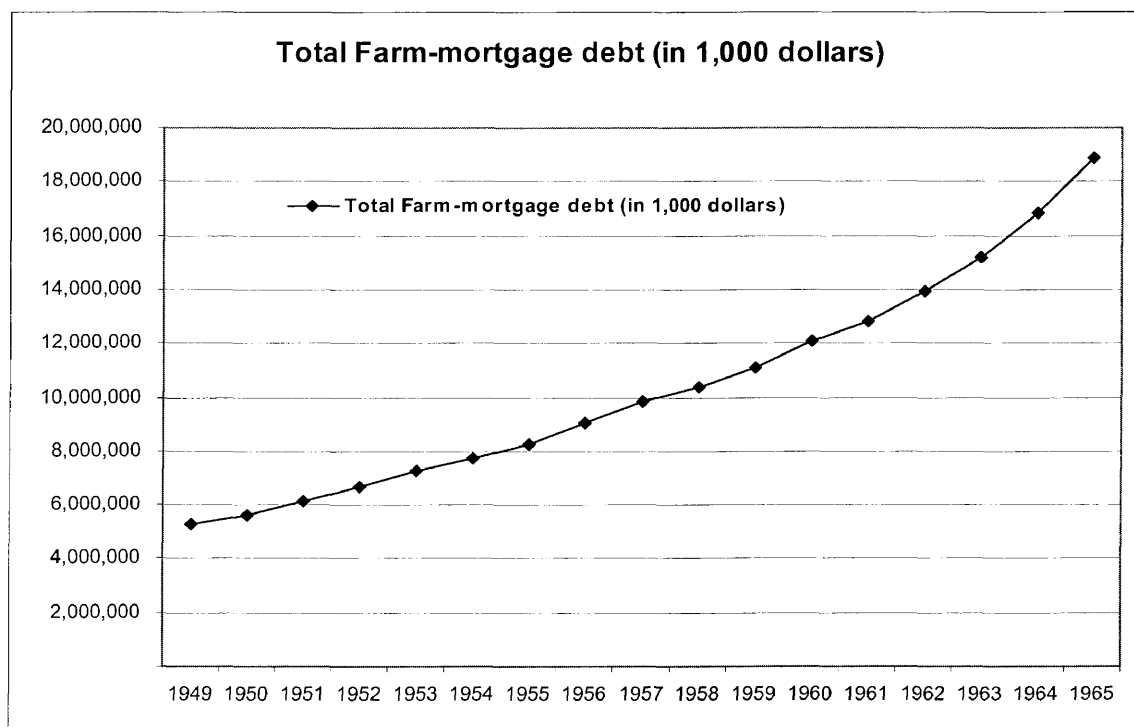


Figure 3.5: Total Farm-Mortgage Debt, 1949-1965, USDA, Agricultural Statistics. Farm mortgage debt more than doubled between 1950 and 1960 as farmers utilized debt financing in order to expand and remain competitive. See Appendix Table 3.3 for detail.

²⁴ *Farm Survey*, Question 25a, "Thinking back to the 1950s and 1960s, do you recall seeing large agricultural businesses (such as International Harvester, John Deere, Cargill) and the USDA promoting products and technology aimed at increasing power, efficiency, and yields?" And, *John Deere Day 1959/60*, produced by John Deere & Co. directed by Ried H. Ray, 97 min., John Deere Films, 1991, videocassette. This annual event featured John Deere's marketing of its new product lines with emphasis on speed, power, and ease. Further examples of agricultural industry marketing pressure can be found in Wayne G Broehl Jr., *John Deere's Company: A History of Deere & Company and Its Times* (Moline: Double Day & Company Inc, 1984), 612. One example is a 1960 advertisement "Announcing a NEW GENERATION of Power" on a brochure introducing new line of four- and six-cylinder tractors, 1960 (See Image 3.1).

²⁵ Bird, "Out-of-Balance," 23. Even as farm prices fell between 1930-1932, total harvested acreage increased. The farmer response, as an individual entity, was to compete against his/her neighbor.

Beyond the downward spiral of overproduction and falling prices, expansion exacerbated differences between farmers by firmly placing farmers against one another as independent entities rather than as an organized lobby (a problem further magnified by the lack of cohesiveness amongst farm organizations).²⁶ These factors contributed to 72% of *Farm Survey* respondents viewing agricultural policy as “forcing farmers to compete against each other.”²⁷ Despite the general agreement when answering this question, a subsequent question asking farmers which factors were most to blame for the problems in U.S. agriculture during the 1950s and 1960s once again proved divisive. Farmers pointed to politics, revolutionary agricultural technology, overzealous farmers, and unsound agricultural policy as possible contributors to the problems in agriculture.²⁸ Interestingly, less than five percent of the answers pointed to the cold war as being a factor. In fact, 37% of farmers did not think the cold war had diverted interest, money, or support from programs intended to alleviate the plight of farmers.²⁹

The incentives of specialization outweighed the negatives on a per farmer basis. The result was increased production (and surplus) – despite the loss of farm labor (see Figure 3.3). Surpluses also grew because farmers were unwilling to submit

²⁶ See Samuel R. Berger, *Dollar Harvest: The Story of the Farm Bureau*, (Lexington, Massachusetts: Heath Lexington Books, 1971), 179. Throughout, Berger explained the dysfunction and corruption of the Farm Bureau, one powerful farm interest lobby, but Berger also explained the fragmented nature of all groups in general. See also Cochrane and Runge, *Reforming Farm Policy*, 22. They termed the pressure to expand as forcing “cannibalization of the small by big.”

²⁷ *Farm Survey*, Question 26, “Did you see agricultural policy as forcing farmers to compete against each other?”

²⁸ *Farm Survey*, Question 29, “In your opinion, which of the following factors is most to blame for the problems in U.S. agriculture during the 1950s and 1960s? Check no more than two:”

²⁹ *Farm Survey*, Question 18, “Did you think the cold war diverted interest, money, and support from the plight of farmers and rural America?” 27 respondents, 12 yes, 10 no, 5 no opinion. See Question 12, page 23. These results reflect closely the responses farmers gave when asked how they felt the cold war affected them.

to acreage allotments and other production curbing policies.³⁰ At fault was an agricultural policy that preferred the costs of subsidization to the costs of political rancor. The formulation of this agricultural policy arose as well from domestic political and economic concerns and the intensifying conflicts of the cold war.³¹

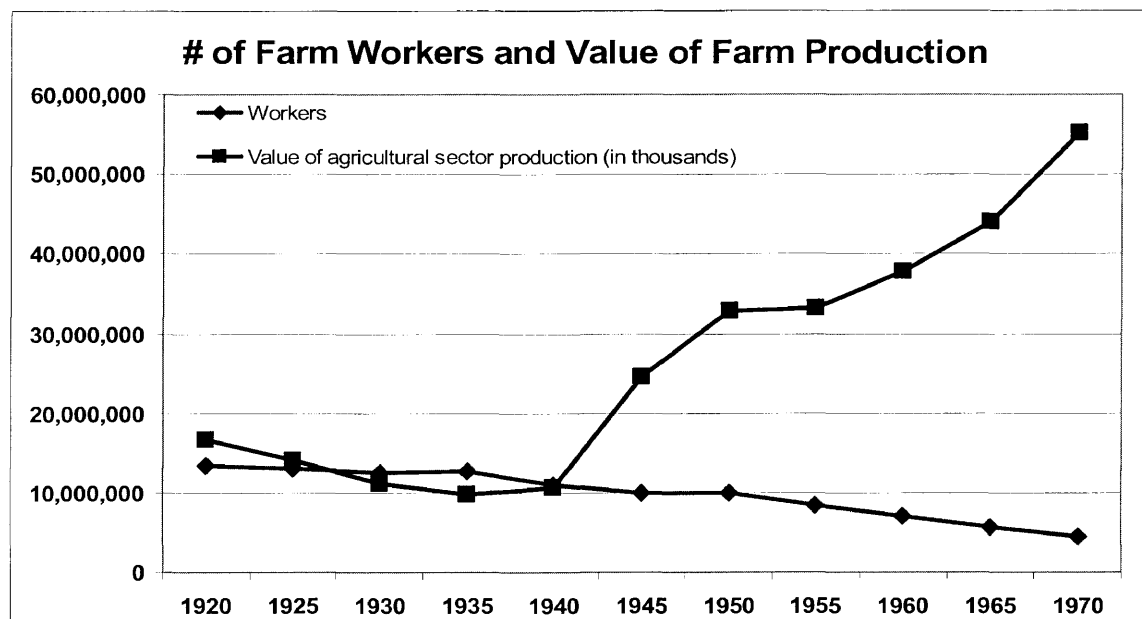


Figure 3.3. Number of Farm Workers and Value of Farm Production 1920-1970, www.usda.gov/nass/ & www.ers.usda.gov/. See Appendix Table 3.2 for detail.

“Farming the Government” – Norval Matzner, Farmer³²

The phrase “farming the government” arose from the ability of a farmer to take advantage of agricultural policy through the exploitation of price guarantees and subsidies. For example, if a farmer violated acreage allotment restrictions and paid resulting fines for two years, the farmer’s acreage allotment would increase the third

³⁰ “How our Readers Voted,” *Farm Journal*, 82 (February 1958): 14. And *New York Times*, November 23, 25-27, 1958 and January 28, 1959.

³¹ Lauren Soth, *An Embarrassment of Plenty*, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1834), 4.

³² Norval Matzner, interview by author, November 20, 2001, telephone conversation. Matzner recalled this common jocular saying that referred to farmers’ exploitation of the U.S. government price support program in the late 1950s and through the 1960s.

year. This was due to a loophole in allotment policy that allowed farmers to base their acreage allocation on their previous two years of total farmed acres. As a result, farmers increased their subsidized acres. The choice between production-curbing subsidies offered by the U.S. government farm programs or attempting to “farm the government” by opting out of the farm program and increasing production to take advantage of subsidized prices was ever-present in the 1950s and 1960s. The two options stood in marked contrast. The subsidization approach was supported by advocates of the rural ideal, in which a farmer class should be made up of many independent small farmers. In contrast, others began to advocate a streamlined, efficient agricultural sector that would move the excess labor in agriculture into the industrial sector.³³ These two positions placed farmers in a quandary. The increasingly complex agricultural policy forced farmers to choose between adhering to production and marketing quotas or trying to benefit from violating them in order to expand their farms.³⁴

This predicament was exemplified in a 1959 *LIFE* interview entitled “A Skilled Grower’s Fat Surplus” with Iowa farmer W.J. Breckenridge of Dinsdale, Iowa. The article stated, “Breckenridge tells what he thinks of a farm program that encourages him and many others to join the run-away production and cash in on the subsidy.”³⁵ Further, Breckenridge alluded to the complex nature of agricultural policy by declaring, “Farmers must operate by constantly shifting rules laid down by

³³ Hughes, “Agricultural Surpluses and American Foreign Policy 1952-1960,” 7-20. Hughes discussed what she terms as the “high price support” versus “world competitive” groups.

³⁴ Toma, *Food for Peace*, 6-15. Toma detailed production controls and mentioned that individual farmers could maximize profit by violating the quota and selling on the open market. Also, Cochrane and Runge, *Reforming Farm Policy*, 4. Cochrane and Runge attested to the “increasingly complex” farm policy.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

Congress and the Secretary of Agriculture.”³⁶ The article portrayed a complex and nuanced farm policy ripe for exploitation and a popular perception of farmers growing fat off the government. *Farm Survey* respondents concurred with this assessment of the complex agricultural policy and had a variety of ideas for solutions. Suggestions ranged from better education on economics to increased diversion/soil-bank programs to better cooperative and farmer organizations. Several farmers still supported a policy that allowed for tighter regulation of production and fair price supports. Others felt strongly that the answer could be found in increased foreign trade and new foreign markets. Support for a freer, unregulated agricultural policy also was hailed.³⁷ Clearly, the issue was one that defied clarity.

When asked what should have been done to assist agriculture in the 1950s and 1960s, *Farm Survey* responses showed clear support for policies that would have aided small farmers more directly. However, few farmers had concrete conceptions of what that assistance should have looked like, nor was there a consistent theme or idea of what should have been done. The basis for much of this diverse opinion was a direct result of there being little agreement on the root cause of agricultural policy problems. Overproduction? Too many farmers? No export market? Low prices? Fixed high prices? Embargoes? Because there were such diverse opinions on the nature of the problem, there existed equally valid solutions for each of the various issues. Yet, no

³⁶ “A Skilled Grower’s Fat Surplus,” *LIFE*, 30 (December 7 1959): 136.

³⁷ Answers taken from results of *Farm Survey*, Question 24 “What do you think could have/should have been done during the 1950s and 1960s to assist U.S. agriculture?”

overwhelming solution was formulated because not only were farmers split on this issue, politicians and the administration were as well.³⁸

By the end of the Eisenhower administration, public sentiment against the agricultural policy was readily apparent. Articles and editorials in such periodicals as *LIFE*, *Newsweek*, and *Farm Journal* expressed concern over U.S. farm policies. An editorial in *Newsweek* in 1959 asked, “How insane can our policy get?”³⁹ The same author in August of 1960 recorded his suggestion for farm policy as “the best farm program would be one to end farm programs.”⁴⁰ Another editorial in *Newsweek* expressed disbelief regarding maintaining farm income by stating, “No nation can guarantee everyone a living where he is, with what he has, forever.”⁴¹ Indeed, the public outcry against the farm program led to a statement in *LIFE* magazine in 1959 that agricultural policy could well be the “thorniest and most important domestic issue” of the 1960 presidential campaign.⁴²

But well before 1960, the Eisenhower administration and America more generally had been aware of the trials facing agriculture. Indeed, from the end of World War II until 1960, agricultural policy had remained at the forefront of domestic politics. Yet, agricultural policy did not undergo significant change during that time, nor in the five decades since. A corn farmer in South Dakota testified that even some farmers have been surprised by how long the supports for farmers have gone on by

³⁸ *Farm Survey*, Question 33, “Describe what you believe caused overproduction and accompanying pressures during the 1950s and 1960s the north central United States?”

³⁹ Henry Hazlitt, “Farm Surplus Solution,” *Newsweek*, 54 (November 30 1959): 88.

⁴⁰ Henry Hazlitt, “To End Farm Surpluses,” *Newsweek*, 56 (August 15 1960): 73.

⁴¹ Raymond Moley, “Politics and the Farmer,” *Newsweek*, 56 (August 29 1960): 90.

⁴² “The Farm Surplus You’re Paying For,” *LIFE*, 30 (November 1959): 22.

stating, “We said thirty years ago that this couldn’t continue, that they [the federal government] couldn’t continue to do this program, but they have.”⁴³

Farmers and the Cold War

Asking farmers about dependence and specialization was an attempt to discover whether these farmers, most in their late 60s or 70s, would connect increased specialization directly with the cold war or foreign policy. None of the respondents pointed to cold war or foreign policy considerations as driving farmers to increased specialization, though most did see surpluses as a weapon in the fight against communism.⁴⁴ Still, they agreed about little else. Farmers’ views are as complex and contradictory as they are important in examining both the changes the cold war made on their farm operations and the lack of cohesiveness in solving agriculture’s problems, in general.

Despite their intimate knowledge of surpluses, farmers were split on exactly what the nature of the surplus problem was. Thirty-one percent saw the farm surplus as a potential opportunity in the form of aid, and an equal number saw surplus as a farm issue to be handled by agricultural policy.⁴⁵ Twenty percent pointed toward political interests having caused the surpluses, and 15% felt that the surplus issue was a national problem.⁴⁶ These answers are reflective of the very splintered nature of farmers’ views. Even within the relatively small geographic area of the survey

⁴³ Matzner, interview by author, December 12, 2001, telephone conversation.

⁴⁴ *Farm Survey*, Question 7.

⁴⁵ *Farm Survey*, Question 10, “After World War II, American agricultural production grew dramatically. By the mid 1950s, this growth had created a national issue of agricultural surpluses. How did you personally view these surpluses? Mark all that apply:” Thirty-one percent viewed this as a potential opportunity and a farm issue.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

respondents, farmers were split on what the surplus problem meant. The ramifications of these fissures ultimately were reflected in the lack of political resolve in any particular farm policy solution.

Although farmers differed on what the surplus problem was, a consensus could be found on at least one potential solution. Seventy-eight percent of the farmers responding felt that, in the 50s and 60s, foreign markets were a “viable outlet (solution) for surplus agricultural commodities.”⁴⁷ This number fell just slightly to 70% when asked if they still felt that way today.⁴⁸ Indeed, the belief in foreign markets was and remains an entrenched notion of how to deal with surpluses. However, this fact also points to one of the major contradictions inherent in an export-surplus strategy: foreign markets have limited resources to purchase food, and U.S.-grown commodities often are too expensive. Thus, in order to sell to these underdeveloped countries, farmers depended on U.S. government subsidization programs, which created a two-price system: one higher domestic price and another lower world price. These export subsidies created dependencies for both the foreign nation and the U.S. farmer.

Like their support for export markets, farmers also overwhelmingly supported the idea of utilizing surplus goods in initiatives such as Public Law 480 and Food for Peace. Eighty-nine percent of farmers supported or strongly supported using

⁴⁷ *Farm Survey*, Question 11a, “Foreign markets have long been presented as an outlet and solution for surplus U.S. agricultural production. In 1960, did you believe foreign markets were a viable outlet (solution) for surplus agricultural commodities?”

⁴⁸ *Farm Survey*, Question 11b, “Do you still feel the same?”

agricultural goods as a developmental tool for the underdeveloped world.⁴⁹ Yet, despite tremendous support for development programs, the farmers surveyed were less optimistic that such programs could create meaningful change. When asked if Public Law 480 or Food for Peace could alleviate hunger, farmers were split: 52% believed it could, 41% believed it could not, and 7% did not have an opinion. Though a thin majority believed that such programs could make a meaningful impact on the hungry of the world, many also were realistic about the true potential of humanitarian aid.⁵⁰

When farmers were asked whether they felt surpluses battled communism, nearly 80% of responses felt that they did.⁵¹ Slightly fewer farmers were inclined to see surpluses as weapons or tools in America's foreign policy. The majority of farmers surveyed did see agriculture's connection to the foreign policy of the United States and thereby the battle against communism.⁵² Obviously, because of the mentality of America at the time, much of this patriotic fervor could be the result of general anti-communist sentiment. Yet, it is important to note that farmers possibly did (and appear to now) view surpluses as active agents in the cold war battle. But also of note is the fact that farmers were far less likely to blame the cold war or foreign policy for the problems in agriculture, despite acknowledging that agriculture played a role in both.⁵³

⁴⁹ *Farm Survey*, Question 19, "How did you feel about plans for America's surplus agricultural products to be used to assist in developing the 3rd World (such as in the "Food for Peace" program begun in the late 1950s)?" 27 respondents, 18 supported, 6 strongly supported.

⁵⁰ *Farm Survey*, Question 30, "Did you believe that through programs such as *Food for Peace* or *Public Law 480* the U.S. could alleviate hunger in the world?" 29 respondents, 15 yes, 12 no, 2 no opinion.

⁵¹ *Farm Survey*, Question 16, "Did you view the use of U.S. surpluses as assisting the United States in battling communism?" 28 respondents, 22 yes, 4 no opinion, 2 no.

⁵² *Farm Survey*, Question 17, "Did you ever feel that U.S. agriculture was being utilized as a 'tool' or 'weapon' against communism?" 26 respondents, 17 yes, 5 no, 4 no opinion.

⁵³ See page 68, the cold war was not blamed for specialization based on responses to Question 7.

Further, despite responses acknowledging that surpluses assisted in the battle against communism and that agriculture was a weapon against communism, fewer farmers were willing to concede their role as cold warriors. When asked whether they saw themselves as assisting in the battle against communism, a slim majority replied positively (53.6%). Twenty-nine percent held no opinion, while 18% felt they did not assist in the battle.⁵⁴ Although the responses to this question may well be chalked up to rural humility, it does denote the disconnect and disinterest of many farmers from recognizing their role in the cold war. And ultimately, one out of four farmers who saw the role of surpluses in battling communism did not extend that role in ‘combat’ to themselves.⁵⁵

Though a majority of farmers acknowledged the possible role of agriculture in the cold war, they did believe that the agricultural surplus problem was a problem to be fixed by agricultural policy.⁵⁶ Despite wanting to help the fight against communism, farmers still wanted the economic benefits to which they felt entitled. However, their surpluses were more than an agricultural problem; they had become an issue of national significance economically and perhaps more of a national issue in terms of security and ideology. The boon of U.S. agriculture stood in contrast to the ineptness of Soviet agriculture.⁵⁷ Further, the surpluses of agricultural stocks were a

⁵⁴ *Farm Survey*, Question 15, “Did you see yourself as assisting in the battle against communism?” 28 respondents, 15 yes, 8 no opinion, 5 no.

⁵⁵ Compiled based on responses to *Farm Survey*, Questions 15 and 16. The difference between those answering affirmatively to Question 15 and those answering affirmatively to Question 16 represented a 25% decrease.

⁵⁶ *Farm Survey*, Question 10, “After World War II, American agricultural production grew dramatically. By the mid 1950s, this growth had created a national issue of agricultural surpluses. How did you personally view these surpluses?

Mark all that apply.” Sixty-three percent saw surpluses as a problem to be handled by agricultural policy.

⁵⁷ Nikita S. Khrushchev, “In Khrushchev’s Own Words—“Why Russia is in trouble,” *U.S. News & World Report*, (February 25, 1955), 58-60. Khrushchev details the issues in Soviet agriculture, from old equipment to red tape to

safety net in the event of an actual war or a natural disaster. At the time, these surpluses were perceived to be worth the costs of subsidization because they held significance to both real and perceived American security.

Farmers held conflicting opinions on just how American foreign policy influenced their farming operations. Without a more clear understanding of U.S. foreign policy and its subsequent bearing on agricultural policy, farmers often were ill-prepared to navigate the diverse ideas and policies floated during the 1950s and 1960s. Instead of blaming cold war pressures, farmers attributed the surplus and agriculture policy problems to an array of factors. Technology – in terms of machinery, technique, hybrids, fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide – was frequently given its due as a factor in overproduction. The “cost-price squeeze” also was listed, in which farmers faced with low prices were forced to maximize production in order to increase volume and eventually their margins. Many farmers listed farm programs as a major factor in fueling agricultural surplus, as the programs failed to create any meaningful method of maintaining income, reducing surpluses, and retaining low food prices for consumers.⁵⁸

Despite the prevalence of agricultural technology and policy being held culpable for the problems, several farmers listed more sophisticated arguments to the surplus question. In particular, 10% of *Farm Survey* respondents felt strongly that the surplus problem was a red herring.⁵⁹ Instead, they thought the problem was with a

outdated theories. Also “Farm Trouble in Russia,” *Farm Journal*, 79 (March 1956), 6+. This article blames much of the problems in Soviet agriculture on government mismanagement.

⁵⁸ Analysis based on answers from *Farm Survey*, Question 33, “Describe what you believe caused overproduction and accompanying pressures during the 1950s and 1960s in the North Central United States.”

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Based on 3 of 29 responses.

government unwilling to find a means of distributing food. This belief stemmed from the notion that surpluses should not exist in a world in which there were starving and hungry people. This argument was expanded by one farmer who stated directly that the United States “has and does wage war by withholding food distribution.”⁶⁰

Essential to this argument is the idea that the United States used food as a weapon of foreign policy. Yet this level of sophistication was not the norm. Instead, farmers, like politicians and policy makers, held significantly disparate views on the causes of the surplus issue, inhibiting consensus on a solution.

Conclusion

Surpluses have proven to be an enigma. They simultaneously represented the bounty of America as well as the limits of American power and will to feed the world. Economically, surpluses resulted in stagnated prices and fostered high government storage and subsidization costs. And yet, from the perspective of the cold war, they enhanced both the real and projected power of the United States. They also were viewed with disdain by some nations. Cheap food extended to all aspects of the U.S. economy as a benefit – except to farmers. Surplus foodstuffs cost taxpayers storage costs, and lack of means and will to distribute food to the needy worldwide revealed the limits of America’s hegemonic power (or possibly the most ignoble nature of U.S. power).

The question of overproduction and its associated problems remains difficult to understand and even more elusive to resolve. Despite political and policy efforts, the existence of surpluses during the 1950s and 1960s lingered. Instead, technology,

⁶⁰ *Farm Survey* response to Question 33.

science, technique, and the will of the farmer converged in a manner that only furthered the surplus problems in the 1950s. The cold war then imposed the security and ideological fears that elevated food, and thereby farmers, into powerful tools of cold war power. In so doing, those same fears and concerns took precedence over a concerted effort to truly innovate a solution for agriculture's woes. Had a foreign threat not existed, domestic pressure very well might have created momentum to force meaningful change. Instead, like the Depression and World War II eras prior, the cold war diverted policy makers and farmers from constructing a solution. As a result, instead of a departure from subsidies and quotas, agricultural policy held stubbornly to the past. Ultimately, a system was enacted that performs like a bleeder valve, slowly releasing excess labor in agriculture while continually rewarding larger, more capital-efficient farms.

The farmers surveyed did not view the cold war as a direct influence on their farm operations. However, it is difficult to dismiss the role the cold war, and subsequently U.S. agriculture, played in the post-World War II world. Whether as trade lever or as developmental aid, agricultural production was of significant value. Further, surplus agricultural stocks, like their brethren nuclear and military stockpiles, were highly symbolic and highly politicized vestiges of U.S. might. Unlike accusations of the United States falling behind the Soviets and creating a "missile gap," no one could suggest a similar "food gap" existed.

The symbolism of America's food bounty and the consequent pride it promoted in farmers was emphasized by cold war fears and competition. In not understanding and accepting their roles in the cold war, farmers allowed themselves to

underestimate the entirety of agriculture's scope and power. Domestic food production, foreign aid, trade, and hegemonic symbols were significant enough to have allowed U.S. agriculture more fortitude in policy demands. Instead, misunderstanding, dissonance, parochialism, and human nature caused friction and fissure that severely hindered any populist effort to create a farm policy that did not reward overproduction and cutthroat competition amongst farmers.

Without a united voice, the agricultural sector left itself open to influence from outside factors. As surpluses mounted and cold war tensions heightened, the Eisenhower administration was able to seize American farm bounty as a useful tool of foreign policy. Through Public Law 480 legislation, the Eisenhower administration manipulated world markets, trade policy, and geopolitics in an effort to strengthen its containment policies. Agricultural surpluses proved to be cheap and useful foreign aid, even while they carried many negative connotations. Though Public Law 480 did little to ease the surplus problem, its foreign policy merits solidified agriculture's role in the cold war.

The fears of communist aggression, world war, and nuclear confrontation served as the basis for food power's importance in the cold war. The bounty of American agricultural production projected U.S. power to the world (and the Soviets). Despite domestic political and economic costs, agricultural surplus production was allowed to continue due in part to the very real value such surpluses held in cold war geopolitics. Food as an asset also meant food as power, and in the cold war, perceptions of power were invaluable.



Afterword

There is little doubt that the half-century that has passed since the 1950s has witnessed impressive transformations. From tense thermonuclear stand-off to détente to disarmament and ultimately to collapse, the cold war seems indisputably an artifact of history. Some of the hot spots around the globe that played large and small parts in the cold war drama have cooled, while others remain as volatile as ever. And still, parts of the underdeveloped world struggle to keep pace and not fall further behind.

Agricultural surplus no longer elicits much press castigation, though agricultural policy, more generally, remains a topic frequently mentioned in discussions of pork-barrel spending. The technology of farming has continued to shift. Now, two-hundred-thousand dollar investments in a single piece of machinery are commonplace, while patents on gene modifications mean farmers don't always own the reproductive rights to their own harvests. Production advances and government subsidy reliance remain, while new dependence on chemical applications has ensnared farmers in costly bonds to chemical-pharmaceutical giants. Thus, much like a half-century ago, farmers remain immersed in a capital intensive industry deeply bound to an agricultural policy of support and subsidy.

The roots of agricultural surplus and policy dysfunction go back in history before the cold war, yet the cold war conflict bound agriculture firmly to the addictions of subsidies and price supports. The chief crops of surplus and subsidy in

the 1950s, are the same chief crops of subsidy today.¹ Without the cold war specter, the surplus bounty is as obsolete as nuclear weaponry and long-range bombers. And though American agricultural bounty still remains a steady source of U.S. power and prestige, subsidized corn and soybeans now remain as politicized as ever. Politicians tout farm-grown alternatives to our oil dependency such as ethanol and soy bio-diesel. While critics link obesity to corn syrups.²

Although these new uses for crops mean there is no longer a surplus, they also remind that the cold war era policies that fueled the shift toward corn and soybean production still echo. Despite the absence of cold war stimulus, agricultural policy favoring large farmers and particular crops remains in existence. Such realities recall the lingering connections to the cold war. No longer a strategic asset combating communism, agriculture nevertheless remains inescapably mired in cold war era policies that fostered an agricultural industry unchecked by simple supply-demand economic constraints.

The future of American agriculture remains to be seen. However, the past is clear, government subsidies, large-scale capital investment, specialization, and production bounty are indicative of agriculture in the last half of the twentieth-century. Agriculture has fueled development and expansion of U.S. power and wealth and, as such, remains an integral cog in the American economic machine. As the tastes and needs of the world food consumer shift, the agricultural sector may be forced to adjust.

¹ U.S. General Accounting Office, *Farm Programs: Information on Recipients of Federal Payments*, (Washington, D.C., 2001) 22.

² Scott Fields, "The Fat of the Land: Do Agricultural Subsidies Foster Poor Health?" *Environmental Health Perspectives*, Vol. 112, No. 14, p. 820-823, 2004.

Just how the future of American agriculture will be constructed is uncertain, though it is clear that in an increasingly globalized society, agriculture, food, and farm income will remain relevant.

Appendix

Table 1.1: Economic Military Assistance Loans and Grants¹

Economic Military Assistance Loans and Grants in \$US millions, historical Source: US Overseas Loans & Grants [Greenbook]				
World Region (Country)	Post-War Relief Period 1946-48	Marshall Plan Period 1949-52	Mutual Security Act Period 1953-61	Foreign Assistance Act Period 1962-99
Total Aid	12,963	28,699	43,352	441,416
Middle East & North Africa (Total)	44	185	3,328	138,603
Sub-Saharan Africa (Total)	10	4	462	29,912
Latin America & Caribbean (Total)	98	144	2,083	39,701
Asia (Total)	2,253	4,111	18,948	83,941
Japan	980	1,221	1,188	565
Oceania (Total)	16	8	79	3,839
Eurasia (Total)	186	-	-	9,080
Eastern Europe (Total)	930	497	1,538	6,264
Western Europe (Total)	8,300	23,078	13,166	35,286
Canada	-	9	22	-
World (not specified)	1,127	663	3,726	94,789

¹ U.S. Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants (The Greenbook)*, http://quesdb.cdie.org/gbk/query_historical.html.

Table 1.2: U.S. Aid 1946-1965²

U.S. Aid 1946-1965										
Economic Military Assistance Loans and Grants										
in \$US millions, historical										
Source: US Overseas Loans & Grants [Greenbook]										
World Region (Country)	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Middle East & North Africa	18.8	23.4	1.4	-	11.8	28.5	144.5	151.6	219.9	255.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	7.2	1.7	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.9	2.4	25.8	30.1	9.7
Latin America & Caribbean	29.6	27.7	40.9	26.2	27.8	17.4	72.8	130.5	67.6	118.0
Asia	321.9	1,159.0	771.9	1,319.3	682.5	1,136.5	972.4	1,152.1	1,909.8	2,050.5
Japan	106.7	389.3	483.7	501.5	365.3	290.3	63.6	91.9	83.1	214.2
Oceania	4.4	11.0	1.0	2.4	0.8	1.0	4.2	5.1	4.8	4.9
Eurasia	86.2	100.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern Europe	549.9	379.6	-	-	-	158.3	338.5	289.2	196.3	215.7
Western Europe	1,303.4	4,863.5	2,132.8	6,755.4	5,135.4	6,140.4	5,046.8	2,912.6	2,085.9	1,151.9
Canada	-	-	-	-	-	2.7	6.0	7.8	4.9	-
World (not specified)	754.3	141.9	230.8	197.2	112.9	126.8	226.3	305.2	248.5	291.3
Total Aid	3,075.7	6,708.0	3,179.5	8,300.7	5,971.3	7,612.5	6,813.9	4,979.9	4,767.8	4,097.5
World Region (Country)	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Middle East & North Africa	224.7	347.1	505.7	455.3	516.5	652.1	661.8	661.4	430.1	470.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	12.2	25.8	16.6	75.4	44.7	221.6	328.8	273.7	234.8	219.3
Latin America & Caribbean	253.8	324.6	211.4	227.3	226.4	523.6	995.0	960.9	1,095.1	915.5
Asia	2,465.4	2,593.3	1,659.0	2,204.9	2,683.1	2,229.5	2,856.4	2,613.2	2,270.7	2,408.1
Japan	261.9	178.8	98.7	48.2	143.2	68.3	167.2	48.1	8.1	18.2
Oceania	5.9	4.7	6.0	29.9	9.7	8.1	25.7	43.5	40.9	28.0
Eurasia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern Europe	125.8	207.7	135.5	185.3	79.9	102.6	122.8	120.1	88.3	91.7
Western Europe	1,381.8	920.3	1,124.4	1,231.2	1,215.2	1,143.0	855.4	903.2	554.4	530.1
Canada	-	-	-	-	-	9.1	-	-	-	-
World (not specified)	378.1	447.8	355.9	665.0	442.7	591.4	686.4	808.8	550.8	758.0
Total Aid	4,847.7	4,871.3	4,014.5	5,074.3	5,218.2	5,481.0	6,532.3	6,384.8	5,265.1	5,420.7

Table 2.1: Food Aid Grants & Loans³

² U.S. Agency for International Development, *The Greenbook*, http://quesdb.cdie.org/gbk/query_historical.html.

³ U.S. Agency for International Development, *The Greenbook*, http://quesdb.cdie.org/gbk/query_historical.html.

Food Aid Grants
in \$US millions, historical
Source: US Overseas Loans & Grants [Greenbook]

World Region (Country)	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Summary of All Countries	83.2	4.1	69.5	398.5	559.3	622.9	503.1	439	540.9	751.9	847.8	927.4	936	639.2
Middle East & North Africa (Total)	25.5	0	25	31.3	31.6	31.3	33.7	62.3	52.7	239.1	129	217.1	126.3	96.1
Sub-Saharan Africa (Total)	0.1	0	0	0	0.6	0.5	0.3	5.8	4.9	17.8	46.8	47.1	17	22.2
Latin America & Caribbean (Total)	0.1	0	0.9	28.4	24.5	61.4	34.9	27.1	18.3	55.3	76.5	96.5	164.9	85.3
Asia (Total)	3.1	1.4	5.1	84.7	217.4	284.6	188.1	205.6	371.6	314.5	403.5	445.5	498.1	348.7
Oceania (Total)	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.4
Eurasia (Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Europe (Total)	24.8	0.2	1.1	114.4	71.3	40	54.5	49.3	21.5	26.7	45.1	24.3	28.4	8.8
Western Europe (Total)	29.6	2.5	37.4	120.1	209.9	158.5	175.8	62.2	60.1	67.2	100.3	49.4	45.1	25.7
Canada	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
World (not specified)	0	0	0	19.6	3.9	46.6	15.8	26.7	11.8	31.3	46.5	47.4	56.2	52

Food Aid Loans
in \$US millions, historical
Source: US Overseas Loans & Grants [Greenbook]

World Region (Country)	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Summary of All Countries	0	0	0	143.4	320.6	539.3	283.2	405.6	434.4	399.2	555	520.7	565.5	723.4
Middle East & North Africa (Total)	0	0	0	10.8	40.8	11.8	34.9	51.4	66.5	79	142.2	109.8	116.6	142.3
Sub-Saharan Africa (Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7.6	26.6	19.6
Latin America & Caribbean (Total)	0	0	0	13.8	85	91.2	28.3	6.1	26	90.1	49.9	67.9	121.4	11.2
Asia (Total)	0	0	0	68.2	93.5	237.9	89.3	210.5	276.6	163.5	191.3	208.9	198.4	422.7
Oceania (Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eurasia (Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Europe (Total)	0	0	0	0	9	84.1	40	66.6	13.5	19.3	75.4	95.5	59	82.9
Western Europe (Total)	0	0	0	50.6	92.3	114.3	90.7	71	51.8	47.3	89.2	31	43.5	44.7
Canada	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
World (not specified)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2.2: Public Law 480 Aid⁴

Food Aid Title I (PL-480)
in \$US millions, historical
Source: US Overseas Loans & Grants [Greenbook]

World Region (Country)	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Summary of All Countries	0	0	0	237.1	476.4	777.7	404.1	557	740.7	673.4	973.4	888	932.4	945
Middle East & North Africa (Total)	0	0	0	10.8	46.7	11.8	34.9	62.9	71.8	106.2	160.4	114.2	121	146.7
Sub-Saharan Africa (Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.7	35.5	27.5	24.4
Latin America & Caribbean (Total)	0	0	0	13.8	85	126.8	28.3	6.1	26.1	117.1	63.9	76.6	150.2	11.2
Asia (Total)	0	0	0	91.1	180	367.8	174.3	332.1	583.1	369.7	515.2	528.4	526.2	634.6
Oceania (Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eurasia (Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Europe (Total)	0	0	0	47.5	68.4	84.1	65.2	85.4	17.3	26.9	98.7	97.5	59	82.9
Western Europe (Total)	0	0	0	7.1	92.4	163.7	107.9	73.6	63.2	53.5	116.5	35.8	48.5	45.2
Canada	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
World (not specified)	0	0	0	2.9	3.9	23.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Food Aid Title II (PL-480)
in \$US millions, historical
Source: US Overseas Loans & Grants [Greenbook]

World Region (Country)	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Summary of All Countries	83.2	4.1	69.5	304.8	403.5	384.5	382.2	287.6	234.6	477.7	429.4	560.1	569.1	417.6
Middle East & North Africa (Total)	25.5	0	25	31.3	25.7	31.3	33.7	50.8	47.4	211.9	110.8	212.7	121.9	91.7
Sub-Saharan Africa (Total)	0.1	0	0	0	0.6	0.5	0.3	5.8	4.9	17.8	35.1	19.2	16.1	17.4
Latin America & Caribbean (Total)	0.1	0	0.9	28.4	24.5	25.8	34.9	27.1	18.2	28.3	62.5	87.8	136.1	85.3
Asia (Total)	3.1	1.4	5.1	61.8	130.9	154.7	103.1	84	65.1	108.3	79.6	126	170.3	136.8
Oceania (Total)	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.4
Eurasia (Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Europe (Total)	24.8	0.2	1.1	66.9	11.9	40	29.3	30.5	17.7	19.1	21.8	22.3	28.4	8.8
Western Europe (Total)	29.6	2.5	37.4	99.7	209.8	109.1	158.6	59.6	48.7	61	73	44.6	40.1	25.2
Canada	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
World (not specified)	0	0	0	16.7	0	23.1	22.3	29.8	32.6	31.3	46.5	47.4	56.2	52

⁴ U.S. Agency for International Development, *The Greenbook*,
http://qesdb.cdie.org/gbk/query_historical.html.

Table 3.1: Wheat and Corn Carry-over Stocks 1938-1964⁵

Wheat and Corn Carry-over Stocks 1938-1964		
(in 1000s of bushels)		
	Total Old Crop Carry-over	
Year	Wheat	Corn
1938	153,107	361,438
1939	250,015	583,740
1940	279,720	687,623
1941	384,916	644,970
1942	632,103	496,880
1943	621,659	384,101
1944	316,575	230,995
1945	279,180	315,272
1946	100,086	171,820
1947	83,837	283,218
1948	195,943	123,473
1949	307,285	813,012
1950	424,714	844,980
1951	396,234	739,247
1952	255,670	486,377
1953	562,486	768,790
1954	933,506	919,681
1955	1,036,178	1,034,823
1956	1,033,487	1,164,823
1957	908,830	1,418,904
1958	881,373	1,469,344
1959	1,295,066	1,524,131
1960	1,313,518	1,786,966
1961	1,411,178	2,008,357
1962	1,321,870	1,639,546
1963	1,194,933	1,345,893
1964	901,193	1,510,148

⁵ USDA, *Agricultural Statistics*, U.S. Government Printing Office (Washington, D.C. 1938-1965). Taken from various years from the detail tables for Wheat and Corn Carryover Stocks.

Table 3.2: U.S. Number of All Farm Workers and Value of Agricultural Sector Production⁶

Year	Workers	Value of agricultural sector production (in thousands)
1920	13,432,000	\$16,632,000
1925	13,036,000	\$14,081,000
1930	12,497,000	\$11,201,000
1935	12,733,000	\$9,821,000
1940	10,979,000	\$10,617,000
1945	10,000,000	\$24,632,000
1950	9,926,000	\$32,805,532
1955	8,381,000	\$33,219,217
1960	7,057,000	\$37,885,588
1965	5,610,000	\$44,086,022
1970	4,523,000	\$55,100,751

⁶ From http://www.usda.gov/nass/graphics/data/fl_frmwk.txt & <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FarmIncome/finfidmu.htm>

Table 3.3: Total Farm Mortgage Debt 1949-1965

Farm Mortgage Debt:		
Amount of outstanding loans reported by principal lenders, other debt, and total debt, United States, Jan. 1, 1949-65		
Year	Total Farm-mortgage debt <i>(in 1,000 dollars)</i>	Year to Year % Increase
1949	5,288,331	---
1950	5,579,278	5.5%
1951	6,112,286	9.6%
1952	6,662,327	9.0%
1953	7,240,937	8.7%
1954	7,739,931	6.9%
1955	8,245,278	6.5%
1956	9,012,016	9.3%
1957	9,821,525	9.0%
1958	10,382,475	5.7%
1959	11,091,390	6.8%
1960	12,082,409	8.9%
1961	12,820,304	6.1%
1962	13,899,105	8.4%
1963	15,167,821	9.1%
1964	16,803,505	10.8%
1965	18,904,480	12.5%
15-Year Change	13,616,149	257.5%

Source: USDA, *Agricultural Statistics*, 1965, Table 716, p. 503

Next five pages: Survey

Farm Survey, Conducted November and December of 2002.

The criteria for the survey involved finding respondents who had farmed during the 1950s and/or 1960s independently or with a relative in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota. Thirty-three questions were posed, consisting of short answer, yes/no, and multiple-choice questions. Some questions also provided room for optional comments. The sampling centered on four geographic areas solidly within the north-central Corn Belt (See Appendix figures 1.1 below). The survey was not necessarily conducted in a strident scientific manner, but an attempt was made to compile a sampling of farmers' views on agricultural policy, foreign policy, and their memories of the cold war. As such, it did provide an interesting insight into this time frame in U.S. history.

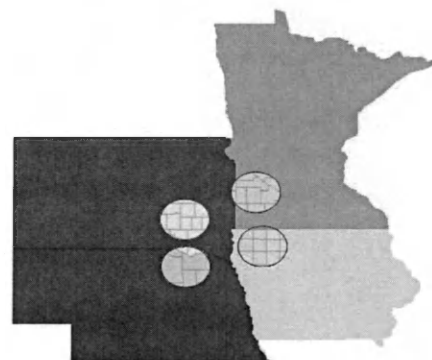
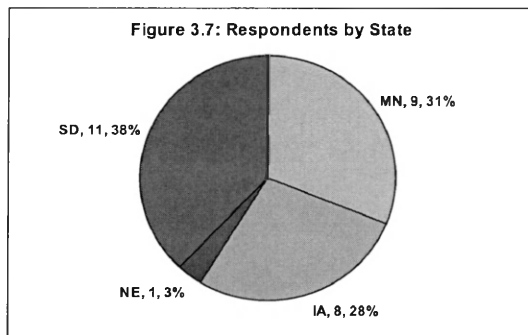


Figure 1.1: Respondents by State

Forty farmers in four states received surveys, of which 29 responses were returned (72.5%). The pie chart above presents the statistical breakdown of these surveys. Per the nature of this study, these farmers were primarily corn and cattle farmers. Of the respondents, 97% raised both corn and cattle in 1960, while by 1985

those numbers fell to 86% still raising corn and 76% still raising cattle.⁷ Overall, livestock production fell markedly between the 1960s and 1980s. Forty-one percent fewer farmers raised hogs and 55% fewer farmers raised poultry. Likewise, in nearly every crop and livestock category, there were dramatic declines. The one exception was soybean production, in which there was a 14% increase.⁸

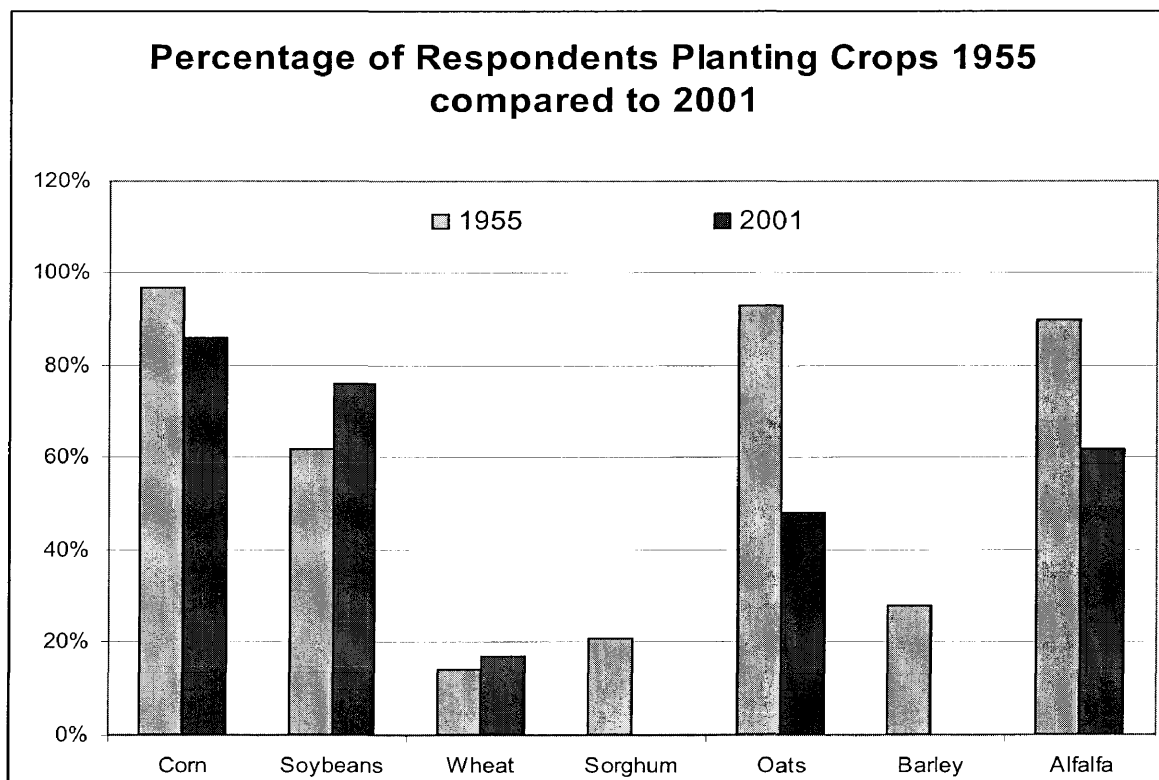


Figure 1.2: Percentage of Respondents Planting Crops 1955 Compared to 2001, *Farm Survey*. Dramatic decreases in Sorghum, Oats, Barley, and Alfalfa, while increases in Soybeans and Wheat, epitomize the shift to principle crops Corn, Soybeans, and Wheat.

Find on the following pages the format of the survey mailed to the selection of farmers.

⁷ *Research Survey*, Question 2, “In which state(s) have you farmed? Check all that apply.” See *Survey* in Appendix.

⁸ From *Farm Survey*, Questions 4 and 6, “What livestock and/or crops did you produce between 1955-1960?” and “What livestock and/or crops did you produce during the past 5 years (or the 5 years prior to retirement)?” In 1960, 21% of the farmers surveyed raised sorghum, but none raised sorghum in their last five years of farming. Additionally, during those last five years, 44 percent fewer farmers raised oats, 28% fewer raised barley, and more than one quarter fewer raised alfalfa.

Thanks for partaking in this survey. The information collected will remain private and anonymous.

The first set of questions are about your general farming/agribusiness experience. The latter questions are more specific. Please answer each question as honestly and accurately as you can recollect. Feel free to answer as little or as much as you wish. Also, feel free to skip questions you feel are not applicable or you do not wish to answer.

If you are/were involved in agriculture or rural business but did not farm directly, check here and skip to question #8 on page 2. If you are/were a farmer, begin with questions #1-7, then skip to question #11.

Farming Background

1. Approximately what year did you begin farming? (If you began farming with a family member or as a youth, estimate the year you began as a full-time farm laborer.) _____
2. In which state(s) have you farmed? Check all that apply.

IA NE SD MN ND WI Other(s) _____

3. Approximately how many acres did you farm in 1960? (Include both tilled and pasture land.)

0-100 100-300 300-500 500-700 700-1000 1000 +

4. What livestock and/or crops did you produce between 1955-1960?

Livestock		Crops	
<input type="checkbox"/> cattle	<input type="checkbox"/> poultry	<input type="checkbox"/> corn	<input type="checkbox"/> oats
<input type="checkbox"/> hogs	<input type="checkbox"/> other(s) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> soybeans	<input type="checkbox"/> barley
<input type="checkbox"/> sheep		<input type="checkbox"/> wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> alfalfa
		<input type="checkbox"/> sorghum	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other(s) _____	

5. Approximately how many acres did you farm in 1985? (Include both tilled and pasture land.)

0-100 100-300 300-500 500-700 700-1000 1000 +

6. What livestock and/or crops did you produce during the past 5 years (or the 5 years prior to retirement)?

Livestock		Crops	
<input type="checkbox"/> cattle	<input type="checkbox"/> poultry	<input type="checkbox"/> corn	<input type="checkbox"/> oats
<input type="checkbox"/> hogs	<input type="checkbox"/> other(s) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> soybeans	<input type="checkbox"/> barley
<input type="checkbox"/> sheep		<input type="checkbox"/> wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> alfalfa
		<input type="checkbox"/> sorghum	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other(s) _____	

7. Do you think farmers have become more dependent on fewer crops or livestock in the last half-century?

Yes No

Explain:

If you have answered questions #1-7, please skip to #10

Agribusiness background (for non-farmers)

8. a) In approximately what year did you begin in agribusiness / a rural business enterprise?

b) In what area(s) were you primarily involved? Check all that apply:

Grain Insurance Seed Equipment sales

Other _____

9. In which state(s) were you involved in agribusiness? Check all that apply.

IA NE SD MN ND WI Other(s) _____

The Surplus Issue

10. After World War II, American agricultural production grew dramatically. By the mid 1950s, this growth had created a national issue of agricultural surpluses. How did you personally view these surpluses?

Check all that apply:

Potential opportunity to assist those in need

National problem that required national attention

Farm issue that should be handled by agricultural policy

Political issue caused and worsened by competing political interests

None of the above

11. a) Foreign markets have long been presented as an outlet and solution for surplus U.S. agricultural production. In 1960, did you believe foreign markets were a viable outlet (solution) for surplus agricultural commodities?

Yes No No opinion

- b) Do you still feel the same?

Yes No No opinion

Cold War Farming

12. During the 1950s and 1960s, the United States became engaged in a conflict with the Soviet Union, generally referred to as the “cold war.” How do you remember it affecting you, your family, and your work? *(If you need additional room, write on the back of this paper.)*

13. Did you support U.S. foreign policy regarding the USSR and China?

Yes No No opinion

14. Were you ever fearful of the USSR or China out-producing American agriculture?

Yes No No opinion

15. Did you see yourself as assisting in the battle against communism?

Yes No No opinion

16. Did you view the use of U.S. surpluses as assisting the United States in battling communism?

Yes No No opinion

17. Did you ever feel that U.S. agriculture was being utilized as ‘tool’ or ‘weapon’ against communism?

Yes No No opinion

18. Did you think the cold war diverted interest, money, and support from the plight of farmers and rural America?

Yes No No opinion

19. How did you feel about plans for America's surplus agricultural products to be used to assist in developing the 3rd World (such as in the "Food for Peace" program begun in the late 1950s)?

Strongly supported Supported Did not support No opinion

Revolving Ag Policy

20. a) Did you favor any of the following U.S. agricultural policies? Check all that apply (or leave blank):

Free market/No support Rigid price supports
 Flexible price supports Production quotas
 Marketing quotas Emergency supports only

b) If you were a farmer, did your views differ depending on what crops or livestock you produced?

Yes No Indifferent

21. Do you think that too often the label 'farmers' was generalized nationally, and not specified by region and crop...thereby causing ineffective legislation enacted by Congress between 1950-1970?

Yes No Indifferent

22. a) In 1960, did you see yourself or farmers in general more as laborers or as businessmen?

Laborers Businessmen

b) Do you still hold this same view?

Yes No

23. Did you or did you know of individuals in the 1950s or 1960s who circumvented marketing quotas, acreage allotments, or some other production control set by the USDA?

Yes No Do not remember

24. What do you think could have/should have been done during the 1950s and 1960s to assist U.S. agriculture?

Agricultural Pressures

25. a) Thinking back to the 1950s and 1960s, do you recall seeing large agricultural businesses (such as International Harvester, John Deere, Cargill) and the USDA promoting products and technology aimed at increasing power, efficiency, and yields?

Yes No No opinion

b) At the time, did you view these marketing campaigns as contradicting the surplus production issues facing the United States?

Yes No No opinion

26. Did you see agricultural policy as forcing farmers to compete against each other?

Yes No No opinion

27. a) What agricultural-related organizations did you belong to in 1960? Check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> Farm Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/> Farmer's Union
<input type="checkbox"/> Grange	<input type="checkbox"/> National Farmer's Organization
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> None

b) If so, what were the primary reasons you belonged? Check all that apply:

- Policies

 Insurance

 Price discounts
 Social outings

 Magazines
 Other _____

c) If so, how often did you support the organization(s') policies?

- Always
 Sometimes
 Never

28. Do you agree with the statement: "U.S. agricultural policy essentially has created a support system farmers have become dependent upon for survival."

- Agree
 Disagree
 Neither agree nor disagree

29. In your opinion, which of the following factors is most to blame for the problems in U.S. agriculture during the 1950s and 1960s? Check no more than two:

- Politics

 Cold war pressures
 Overzealous farmers

 Unsound agricultural policy
 Revolutionary agricultural technology

 Other _____

30. Did you believe that through programs such as *Food for Peace* or *Public Law 480* the U.S. could alleviate hunger in the world?

- Yes
 No
 No Opinion

31. Did you see the USSR or other countries behind the "Iron Curtain" as potential markets that were not adequately investigated during the 1950s and 1960s?

- Yes
 No
 No Opinion

32. During the late 1950s, some studies suggested that there were just too many farmers and not enough customers for their goods. At that time, did you agree with this assessment?

- Yes
 No
 Do not remember

33. Describe what you believe caused overproduction and accompanying pressures during the 1950s and 1960s the North Central United States:

Survey Results

Question 2	
State	Respondents
IA	8
MN	9
NE	1
SD	11

Question 3	
Farm Size (In Acres)	Respondents
100-300	16
300-500	6
500-700	3
700-1000	1
1000 +	2

Question 5	
Farm Size	Respondents
100-300	3
300-500	3
500-700	4
700-1000	7
1000 +	6

Question 7	
Respondents	%
24	83%

	Question 4		Question 6	
	1955-1960	%	Past 5 Yrs/5 years prior to retirement	%
Cattle	28	97%	22	76%
Hogs	27	93%	15	52%
Sheep	3	10%	2	7%
Poultry	18	62%	2	7%

	Question 4		Question 6	
	1955-1960	%	Past 5 Yrs/5 years prior to retirement	%
Corn	28	97%	25	86%
Soybeans	18	62%	22	76%
Wheat	4	14%	5	17%
Sorghum	6	21%	0	0%
Oats	27	93%	14	48%
Barley	8	28%	0	0%
Alfalfa	26	90%	18	62%

Question 10		
	Respondents	%
Potential Opportunity	17	63%
National Problem	8	30%
Farm Issue Only	17	63%
Political Problem	11	41%
None of these	1	4%

Question 11a		
	Respondents	%
No	4	15%
No Opinion	2	7%
Yes	21	78%

Question 11b		
	Respondents	%
No	8	30%
Yes	19	70%

Question 13		
	Respondents	%
No	3	11%
No opinion	10	37%
Yes	14	52%
<i>Total</i>	27	

Question 14		
	Respondents	%
No	25	86%
No opinion	1	3%
Yes	3	10%
<i>Total</i>	29	

Question 15		
	Respondents	%
No	5	18%
No opinion	8	29%
Yes	15	54%
<i>Total</i>	28	

Question 16		
	Respondents	%
No	2	7%
No opinion	4	14%
Yes	22	79%
<i>Total</i>	28	

Question 17		
	Respondents	%
No	5	19%
No opinion	4	15%
Yes	17	65%
<i>Total</i>	26	

Question 18		
	Respondents	%
No	10	37%
No opinion	5	19%
Yes	12	44%
<i>Total</i>	27	

Question 19		
	Respondents	%
Did Not Support	1	4%
No Opinion	2	7%
Strongly Supported	6	22%
Supported	18	67%
<i>Total</i>	27	

Question 21		
	Respondents	%
Indifferent	5	19%
No	1	4%
Yes	20	77%
<i>Total</i>	26	

Question 22a		
	Respondents	%
Businessmen	15	52%
Laborers	14	48%
<i>Total</i>	29	

Question 22b		
	Respondents	%
No	14	48%
Yes	15	52%
<i>Total</i>	29	

Question 23		
	Respondents	%
Don't Remember	10	40%
No	5	20%
Yes	10	40%
<i>Total</i>	25	

Question 25a		
	Respondents	%
No	6	22%
Yes	21	78%
<i>Total</i>	27	

Question 25b		
	Respondents	%
No	9	32%
No Opinion	5	18%
Yes	14	50%
<i>Total</i>	28	

Question 26		
	Respondents	%
No	7	24%
No Opinion	1	3%
Yes	21	72%
<i>Total</i>	29	

Question 28		
	Respondents	%
Agree	25	86%
Disagree	1	3%
Neither	3	10%
<i>Total</i>	29	

Question 30		
	Respondents	%
No	12	41%
No Opinion	2	7%
Yes	15	52%
<i>Total</i>	29	

Question 31		
	Respondents	%
No	3	11%
No Opinion	6	22%
Yes	18	67%
<i>Total</i>	27	

Question 32		
	Respondents	%
Don't Remember	6	21%
No	20	71%
Yes	2	7%
<i>Total</i>	28	

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Vita

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Alan Herbert Matzner was born in Mitchell, South Dakota on September 30, 1975, the youngest of four children. He attended Stickney Public High School and graduated in 1994. In 1998, he graduated magna cum laude from Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, with a B.A. in English.

In 2001, Alan Matzner enrolled in the College of William and Mary's history graduate program. He apprenticed in the Digital History Laboratory at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. He defended his thesis in February of 2002. After completing his master's years of coursework, Alan Matzner continued work within the Digital History Laboratory at Colonial Williamsburg focusing on merging digital text and images with historic maps within a geographic information system. He has been employed at the University of Nebraska since 2004.