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The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FULLY three-fourths of all the crops produced in the United States trace back to introductions from other countries. All of the principal types and breeds of domestic livestock in the U.S. are of foreign origin. Even those breeds that might be said to have been developed in this country are derivatives of foreign stocks used in breeding. Many of the techniques used in advancing agriculture in the U.S. are of foreign origin, e.g., pasteurization, and most animal disease-control measures. To these and many others add such important items as penicillin and DDT.

These enormous benefits to our agriculture—these bases for abundance in our food supply—were derived from many sources, throughout many years, by divers routes. Some of them, such as corn and tobacco, came to us incidental to the discovery of America. Some came in the luggage of early immigrants. Some were sent by alert travelers in other lands, as missionaries. Many of them are the result of purposeful endeavor, as the systematic plant exploration and introduction sponsored for more than a century by the U.S. government. Then, too, there must be included the many benefits that have flowed to us as the result of scientific and technological advancement in the world generally.

The U.S. has done a remarkably good job in adapting and developing introduced materials and techniques to the varied requirements of this country; and, through its own research and development activities, it has contributed notably to the advancement of knowledge which has been shared freely with other countries.

International cooperation, however informal, has been an influence of tremendous magnitude in this spread of materials, ideas, and experience. It has not been the only influence. Sometimes the might of conquerors, sometimes exploitation, sometimes sheer intrigue have influenced the spread. But in our own case, the courtesies of nations, and the willing cooperation of institutions and sympathetic individuals within those nations, have played a leading role. International cooperation with us has been a two-

way street which has produced mutual benefits for all participants.

Yet even in our own case, international cooperation for the most part has been somewhat intermittent and lacking in the design that our advancement now permits us to visualize as the resultant of more formal, consistent procedure. We realize more than ever before that some of the food and agriculture problems still confronting us require for their solution the most suitable materials and the most advanced techniques which may come from outside as well as from within our own borders. Their importance to us gains emphasis as we regard our possible requirements a generation or more hence, as population presses increasingly upon our resources.

It is important, therefore, that we keep prominently in mind the potential of international cooperation, especially as it may be stimulated and facilitated by organized international purpose designed to promote the well-being of people in all countries. By helping other nations to help themselves we can in turn help ourselves; indeed, we can continue to be a principal beneficiary of cooperation.

In this frame of thought the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations looms large as a potentially valuable medium through which cooperation in this field may be encouraged and developed. For FAO is the one international organization whose primary function is to promote such cooperation. Although only eight years old, it has made commendable progress. It has gained needed experience, clearer comprehension of problems, and knowledge of the people confronted by those problems. Continued gains of that type will benefit all countries, including the advanced as well as the underdeveloped countries.

The continuity, solidity, and security of FAO as an international institution around which to further international cooperation in the field of food and agriculture command the interest and serious consideration of 68 nations assembled in Rome for the seventh session of the FAO Conference (Nov. 23-Dec. 12). Among those nations none is more interested or more concerned about the future of FAO than the United States. It is gratifying to know that the official position of this country is wholeheartedly behind the Organization.

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SCIENCE, founded in 1880, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at the Business Press, 10 McGovern Ave., Lancaster, Pa. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Lancaster, Pa., January 13, 1948, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at the special rate postage provided for in the Act of February 28, 1925, embodied in Paragraph (d-2) Section 34.40 P. L. & R. of 1948. All correspondence should be sent to SCIENCE, 1515 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington 5, D. C. The AAAS assumes no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts or for the opinions expressed by contributors. Four weeks' notice

is required for change of address, and an address stencil label from a recent issue must be furnished. Claims for a missing number will be allowed only if received within 60 days from date of issue.

Annual subscriptions, \$7.50; single copies, \$.25; foreign postage, outside the Pan-American Union, \$1.00; Canadian postage, \$.50. Special rates to members of the AAAS.

The AAAS also publishes THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY. Subscription and advertising rates on request.

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