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Letter No. 2331

September 24, 1987

**SOVIET GRAIN
HARVEST LAGS**

As of September 14, small grains and pulses in the Soviet were cut on an area of over 328 million acres and threshed on over 210 million acres, the latter given as 77 percent of the sown area, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The grain harvest was delayed initially by the late spring and now by frequent rains. At the same time last year, 232 million acres of small grains and pulses had been threshed. The 1980-84 average was 242 million acres.

**SAUDI ARABIAN
WHEAT TO EC?**

The European Community, facing prospects of diminished quality in this year's wheat crop, will reportedly import over 100,000 tons of bread-quality wheat from Saudi Arabia, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Historically, the EC has imported virtually all of its high-quality wheat from the U.S. and Canada. Saudi Arabia has only recently become a wheat exporter, with exports this year forecast at last year's level of 1 million tons.

**WORLD ECONOMIC
FORECAST FOR 1988**

After declining for 3 years, the rate of world economic growth is forecast to increase in 1988, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Outside the U.S., economic growth is forecast at 2.7 percent, after adjusting for inflation. With the U.S. included, the growth rate is projected at 3 percent. Among the industrialized countries, the U.S. will contribute much more to world economic growth than Japan or West Germany. Oil-exporting countries stand to benefit from recently higher oil prices. Extremely low world market prices for most developing countries' exports will continue to inhibit economic growth in those countries.

**CORN, SOYBEANS
AND GRAIN
SORGHUM EXPORTS**

U.S. corn exports for the 1986/87 marketing year total 39 million 60 thousand metric tons, compared to 31 million 440 thousand tons for the previous marketing year. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, this represents an increase of 24 percent above the previous year, but is 13 percent below the five-year average. Exports of grain sorghum totaled 4 million 990 thousand tons compared to 4 million 620 thousand the previous year, an increase of 8 percent, but 18 percent below the five-year average. Soybeans exports totaled 20 million 930 thousand tons, compared to 20 million 31 thousand tons for the previous year, a 3 percent increase, but 4 percent below the five-year average.

AG EXPORTS - U.S. agricultural export volume during the first 10 months of
10 MONTHS fiscal 1987 totaled 107 million 900 thousand tons, up 16 percent
VOLUME from the same period a year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Grains accounted for most of the rise as lower U.S. prices, reduced competitor supplies and the Export Enhancement Program increased the U.S. share of the world grain trade. Export volume for each of the last two months of the fiscal year must average 10 million 600 thousand tons to reach the USDA forecast of 129 million tons. In the last four months, exports have averaged 11 million 100 thousand tons each month.

AG EXPORTS - U.S. export value during the first 10 months of fiscal 1987
10 MONTHS totaled \$23 billion 400 million, up \$866 million from the same
VALUE period last year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That was a 4 percent increase in value. Lower world prices for major grain and feed products offset much of the volume increase of 16 percent for the 10 month period. The USDA forecasts fiscal 1987 exports at \$28 billion, up 6 percent from last year. Increased livestock, horticulture and cotton exports are expected to account for most of the gain.

AG EXPORTS U.S. agricultural exports during July 1987 totaled 12 million 600
DURING JULY - thousand metric tons, up 70 percent from the 7 million 400
VOLUME & VALUE thousand tons exported during July 1986...and up 26 percent from June 1987, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Increased wheat sales to Egypt, the USSR and China were largely responsible, plus strong barley sales to Saudi Arabia under the Export Enhancement Program. The value of agricultural exports totaled \$2 billion 390 million, up 40 percent over July 1986 and 15 percent above June 1987 levels. Strong soybean and grain and feed sales accounted for much of the year-to-year increase.

CROPLAND In the United States, cropland used for crops - harvested, failed,
DECLINES and summer fallowed - is estimated at 330 million acres in 1987, down 27 million or 8 percent from 1986, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cropland for harvest is 24 million acres lower, crop failure is down about 3 million acres, and summer fallow acreage is unchanged from 1986. This year's cropland continues a downward trend from a record 387 million acres in 1981, when no cropland was idled under Federal programs. The 1988 crop acreage is likely to decline further as farmers are expected to put more land into the Conservation Reserve Program.

IDLED Farmers idled about 68 million acres under Federal programs in
ACREAGE 1987, second only to the 78 million acres in 1983, and 24 million more than last year. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, about three-fourths of the 1987 idled acreage is in annual reduction programs, while the remaining 16 million acres are highly erodible cropland removed from production for 10 years and enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). An additional 7 million acres were signed up for the 1988 CRP. Largest reductions are in the Corn Belt, 9 percent; Northern Plains, 6 percent; Lake States, 8 percent; and Southern Plains, 15 percent.

NEW TELEVISION SATELLITE SCHEDULE - ALL ON WESTAR IV

Thursdays...AG UPDATE/SATELLITE NEWS, 7:30-7:45 p.m. ET...Transponder 12D
 Saturdays...A BETTER WAY, 10:00-10:30 a.m. ET...Transponder 9X
 ORIGINAL DOWN TO EARTH, 10:30-11:00 a.m. ET...Transponder 9X
 UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET...Transponder 9X
 Mondays.....A BETTER WAY, 8:00-8:30 a.m. ET...Transponder 12D
 REPEAT DOWN TO EARTH, 8:30-9:00 a.m. ET...Transponder 12D
 UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 9:00-9:15 a.m. ET...Transponder 12D

FROM OUR
 TELEVISION
 SERVICE

CURRENT AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK...Farm output this year is nearly equal to 1986. USDA economist Herb Moses discusses the current agricultural outlook. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (286)

CURRENT WHEAT OUTLOOK...The current average wheat yield per acre is the third highest ever. USDA economist Allen Schienbein examines the situation and outlook for wheat. Vic Powell interviews. (287)

CURRENT TOBACCO OUTLOOK...Tobacco yields are up, with production forecast at six percent higher than last year. USDA economist Verner Grise discusses the situation and outlook for tobacco. Vic Powell interviews. (288)

ECONOMIC CHANGES IN RURAL AMERICA...The U.S. economy seems to be undergoing some major structural changes, especially painful in rural areas. Dr. Thomas Johnson, an extension specialist with Virginia Tech describes affects on rural communities. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (289)

POPCORN AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS...Illinois farmers Bennie Cox and Wayne Arthur describe the benefits of growing popcorn as an alternate crop to corn and soybeans. Greer Kimel interviews. (290)

FROM OUR RADIO
 SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1582...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) Brenda Curtis talks with extension agents and scientists about alternative crops and farming practices.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1571...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; New look for commodity certificates; Farm ponds pay twice; Integrated pest management update; Acid rain and crops.

CONSUMER TIME #1062...(Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Acid rain study; Name change for beef grade; Fish oil warning; Adult 4-H volunteers; Is car leasing for you?

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Oct. 6, Crop and weather update; Thurs, Oct. 8, U.S. crop production, Soviet grain outlook, World ag. supply and demand; Fri, Oct. 9, World crop production, World oilseed, World cotton outlook, (also items from a scheduled telephone press conference with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator, Tom Kay); Oct. 12 (holiday); Wed, Oct. 14, Crop and weather update; Thurs, Oct. 15, Milk production. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

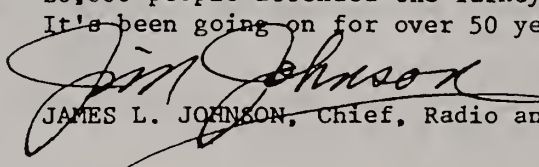
OFF MIKE

First and foremost...we have a new satellite and schedule for distributing our television programming materials. The information is listed elsewhere in this newsletter (page 3, I think, depending on where Florence Kelly could find room). Important factor is we are now using satellite only (no more videotapes) to distribute our programs ... Lots of calls for free copies of the Fact Book of Agriculture. We still have a few copies left, so let us know if you want one. They're free ... One caller for a book was Lynn Ketelsen (Linder Farm Net, Willmar, MN). During the conversation we learned that Lynn had entered the Minnesota State Barbecue Competition...and won first place in the beef category. His winner is called Terriyaki Beef Roast (he's promised us the recipe), and the next step is the national competition ... Before we forget, Soil Conservation Service has an excellent videotape on "Stay Eligible for USDA Programs." It runs 8:15 and is cleared for use on television. If you want a copy, let us know ...

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 Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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Hugh Robinson (KKOW, Pittsburg, KS) received the first place award for service to agriculture from the Kansas Association of Broadcasters for his series, "What's Positive about Agriculture." Nice going, Hugh ... Nice note from Bob Givens (KGNC, Amarillo, TX) to request a Fact Book of Ag and to let us know he has a new assistant. He's Larry DeSha, been there since June, comes from Illinois but "...is a Texan now," and will be at the NAFB meeting in Kansas City ... Another Fact Book went to Bob Ziegler (WIMA, Lima, OH) who reports the Ohio State Farm Science Review had over 500 exhibitors and was well covered by himself and other farm broadcasters ... And Bruce Lease (KWOA, Worthington, MN) reports that at least 20,000 people attended the Turkey Day Celebration at Fairmont. It's been going on for over 50 years.


 JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief, Radio and Television Division