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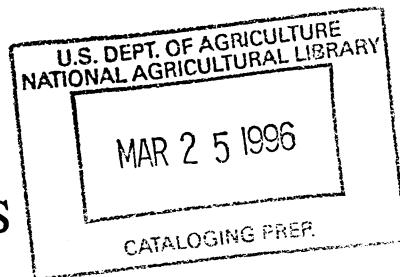
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DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
AND  
INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL TRADE

A Conference Sponsored by S-224 Regional Research Project

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Fred J. Ruppel  
Program Coodinator

Stanley M. Fletcher  
S-224 Chair

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**DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
AND  
INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL TRADE**

**Session I**

**Overview, General Issues and Theoretical Considerations**

**Monday, April 8  
8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon**

**Fred J. Ruppel  
Texas A&M University  
Moderator**

## DEVELOPING NATIONS AS A SOURCE OF U.S. EXPORT GROWTH

Thomas Vollrath and Linda Scott  
*Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Health of the U.S. economy, both inside and outside of agriculture, is tied to the fortunes of developing nations. In the 1980's, growth of agricultural imports in developing nations diminished considerably from 1970-levels in large part because of stagnation of income growth and international debt obligations. At this time, the United States lost market share to competitors, little change occurred in domestic demand, and U.S. agricultural output stagnated.

The potential exists for developing nations to become important dynamic growth markets for U.S. products. The developing nations comprise more than half of the world's population and their population growth is greater than that in the developed world. Indeed, developing-nation demand for foodgrains and other primary agricultural products is, and will continue to be, stimulated by this population factor in the foreseeable future.

If developing nations are able to augment their incomes, increased imports, especially imports of agricultural goods, will assuredly follow. With real economic growth, developing-nation demand for foodgrains and meats and their derived demand for feedstuffs will outstrip domestic supply which is currently constrained by meager resources and low levels of technology.

Yet, the recent historical period shows that developing nations have not been a particularly strong U.S. growth market. The ability to exploit this latent, but largely untapped, market potential depends to a great extent on the global policy environment, including whatever agricultural liberalization measures are adopted as a result of the (post?) Uruguay Round of the GATT.

Here, the importance and the character of developing-nation and U.S. trade will be examined. Attention is directed towards 10 nations, namely Mexico, Brazil, and the following eight developing-nation regions--Other Latin America, Subsaharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Old Asian NIC's, New Asian NIC's, South Asia, Other Southeast Asia, and Communist Asia. Primary focus is on trade within the various agricultural sectors. But, the general nature of economy-wide trade is also surveyed analytically.