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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Food and Nutrition Service

"TO PUT AN END TO HUNGER"

Talk by Edward J. Hekman
Administrator

at the 1970 National Agricultural Outlook Conference
Washington, D.C., 10:15 A.M., Tuesday, February 17, 1970

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Many of you were here in this same Auditorium, last year, for the 1969 Outlook Conference. I know you remember the earnest address with which Secretary Hardin greeted you, in his first major appearance as our new Secretary of Agriculture.

It is especially significant that food assistance headed the list of things that were uppermost on his mind as he embarked on his new duties, of giving new drive and direction to the Department.

When the Secretary told you of the new emphases that he saw in Agriculture, he spoke first -- you will remember -- of "the effort to remove malnutrition from our land."

"We are hoping," he said, "to move with every possible resource we can muster in this direction." His remarks on this subject cover fully a page of the 4-page transcript of his address to you. Let me suggest that you re-read those remarks, in your files of last year's Conference. In them, Secretary Hardin reported that he was going to the White House to meet with the new Urban Affairs Council, of which he had been named a member.

Over the next three months, the deliberations of that Urban Affairs Council progressively evolved into the action the Secretary had hoped for.

On May 6th, President Nixon sent a milestone message to the Congress -- the message which evolved from those studies of the Urban Affairs Council. That's the message in which President Nixon enunciated his now famous commitment that:

"The moment is at hand, to put an end to hunger in America itself, for all time."

It was in that May 6th message, too, that the President declared his intention to call a White House Conference on Food and Nutrition. The Conference has completed its work, now, under the able leadership of Dr. Jean Mayer, and many of you have seen the 625-page Conference report.

All Americans have been committed by their President to the elimination of hunger "in America itself, for all time." We in the Food and Nutrition Service are committed to this, and we trust that every American is so committed.

Then it becomes a question of how this job can be done. I hope that, in these few minutes here today, we can report to you on some of our activities, and take a broad look at how we, as Americans, can expect to reach the goal that has been set for all of us.

First of all, I would suggest that there must be a recognition, a consensus, that there is a need -- that there is hunger in America. Thankfully, hunger in America has been made visible. The conscience of America has been awakened. Without this, no social need can be met in our democratic society.

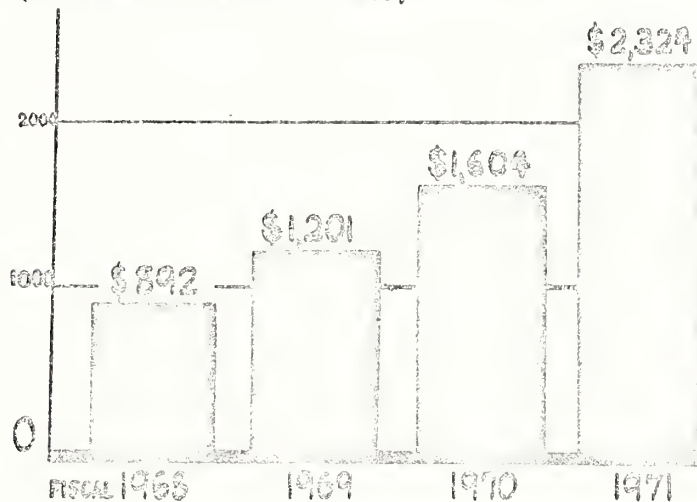
Second, there must be a commitment on the part of Americans to meet the need as this need has been demonstrated.

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Third, this commitment must be expressed in "tools" from the Congress in terms of adequate legislation and the necessary appropriation. Let me show you a chart, now, of the F-N-S budget request for 1971, and the comparable figures for earlier years:

FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - TOTALS

(IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)



This is an on-going relationship with the Congress. It is not our purpose here to review the status of legislative or budget requests from the Administration, except perhaps to point out that -- especially in the area of food stamps -- additional legislation would be helpful in reaching our common goal.

Fourth, given the tools and given the commitment, we need programs, well-structured programs, to make food available to the hungry -- to translate legislation and money into food for the hungry. But programs are no better than the personnel that carry them out. I have been in Agriculture for only 6 months, but this time has provided me with an opportunity to visit broadly in America, and to get to know the people in the Food and Nutrition

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Service, both here in Washington and in all of our Regional Offices. I am happy to tell you -- and I know this is important to you -- that the people we have in the Food and Nutrition Service know their job, and are dedicated to use the means that America has made available to them to do what they can to meet this goal.

Important as it is that we have trained personnel in F-N-S, it is equally important that the elected officials and the administrative people in the 50 States, and in the territories, be individuals with whom we can work on a cooperative basis -- taking these Federal programs to the State and local level, and there together working out a joint local-State-Federal program to get the job done.

I have visited in many States, with Governors and administrative people in welfare and educational offices. I have seen the three programs -- Child Nutrition, Commodity Distribution, and Food Stamps -- as they operate at the local level. And I am convinced that this is the way -- through local, State and Federal cooperation -- that we shall accomplish our common objectives. I have been impressed by the dedication, and by the training for their jobs, that is found at these levels of Government -- the same sort of dedication and training that I find among our Federal staff.

The F-N-S organization represents only a very small part of the administrative staff that carry out these vast programs. The answer, as I am sure you know so well, is that these are, effectively, local-State-Federal programs. We in Agriculture wish to keep them in this framework, seeking ever to make the relationship more effective, and to make the programs ever more responsive to the individual citizens who use them.

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Finally, in this catalog of necessary steps to reach our goal -- and this list is not all inclusive -- I would mention what I think is a very important ingredient. That is, the absolute necessity of convincing the American public that the funds and the programs are effective. Here, we can have no credibility gap.

I am convinced, as a citizen -- and also as Administrator of your Food and Nutrition Service -- that we are going to go just as far as we have the backing of a broad segment of America. And we will have this backing, only if the American public is convinced that the programs are making a substantial contribution to reaching the goal, that they are efficiently run, and are responsive to the needs of the hungry in our Nation.

It is important for us who are Administrators to look back, once in a while, over our shoulder. I know we should be looking forward. But I think that it's equally important that we be willing to look backward -- to see if anybody is following us.

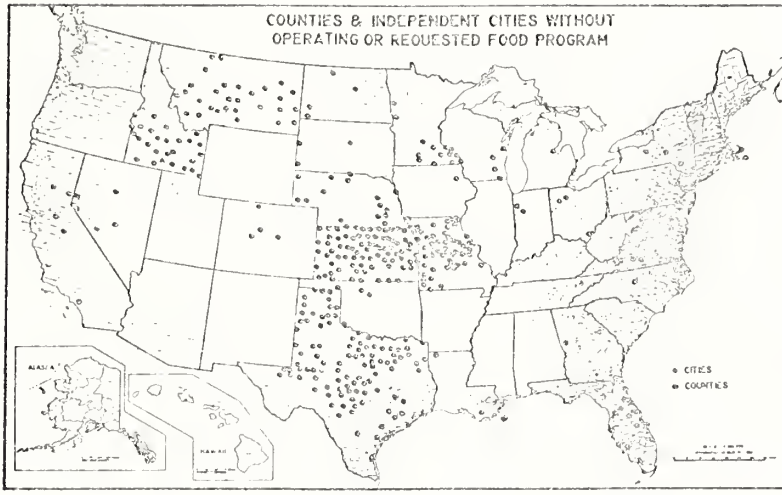
In the balance of the time that I have here, I would like to tell you how your Food and Nutrition Service is using the tools, and how it is operating the programs, to help to get this job done.

As you know, there are basically three programs -- Child Nutrition, Commodity Distribution, and Food Stamps. Let's talk first about our goal to get a family food program into each of the counties of the United States.

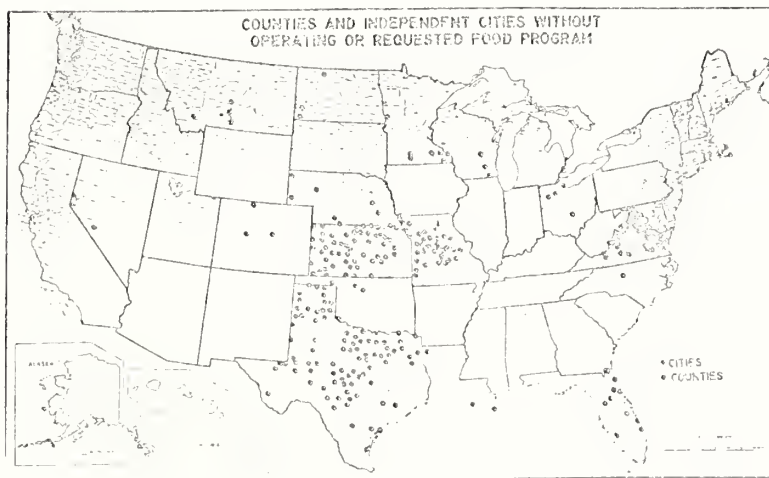
We have conducted a campaign, since the President's message, to make food programs available to all the 440 counties which at May 6th had no food assistance program. We have cut that number down, now, to 266. And we are going to push ahead, as the President said, to get a food program into every county by the end of this fiscal year, by June 30.

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Let me show you what this means in terms of availability of food programs to poor people throughout the country. Starting with the May 6th figure of 440 counties without programs -- here is where those counties were located:



And now that we are down to 266 counties -- here is where those remaining counties are located.



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We'd like all the help you, and everyone else can give us, in getting food programs started in those counties. To help you to help us, we've printed a list of the 266 counties as an appendix to the copies of my talk. I hope you'll take that list with you -- and see what you can do.

We in F-N-S are anxious to get these programs into all the counties, and feel that this should be done on a voluntary basis. We are glad that, in this effort, we are getting real help from the Governors of the States that have counties without programs. I have visited with several of these Governors, and it wasn't necessary for me to detail to the Chief Executive, the counties that did not have a program. Rather, the Governors were telling me -- detailing what steps they had taken from their Executive Offices to work with the counties to establish programs.

I am confident this job will be done by June 30th. We in F-N-S are so committed to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Let me tell you now of the considerable improvements that we have made in the Food Stamp Program. As soon as the \$610 million dollars for this year was appropriated, Secretary Hardin announced major modifications in the program, which amount to the fact that participants pay less and get more -- get enough more so that every family can buy the USDA's "Economy Food Plan."

Eligible participants have responded enthusiastically, as we have been able to get these modifications into effect. Some counties put the improvements into effect quickly, and we have these reports on what has happened.

Thirty-five areas put the new schedule into effect in January, and we now have preliminary reports from 18 of them. Program participation in January increased 20 percent over December in those areas, and the total value of food coupons distributed increased by almost 46 percent. More importantly, the total value of bonus stamps given to participants increased by almost 110 percent.

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Our Child Nutrition Programs are a counter-part of our Family Food Programs, and we have re-oriented these programs to put their prime force into providing meals to children who come from poor homes. We have a goal of extending free or reduced-price lunches to all 6,600,000 school children from low-income families, who need such help, by Thanksgiving time.

That, also, is no easy objective, and we will welcome all the help you can give us. With such help, we're confident that we and our local and State partners can come up with the innovations that will enable us to make our mark.

We're drawing, for example, on the know-how of the Nation's food management companies, to get lunches into schools we've never been able to reach. We've given notice of our intention to make that change, to State School Lunch Directors, who are our cooperators in the States, and they welcome the innovation.

This was one suggestion that came to us out of the White House Conference. We are checking those recommendations carefully, to garner all the good we can from them. We are, for example, working with the special needs of Indians on reservations. We have re-oriented dry milk purchases to get as much "instant" as possible. We're about to enunciate a new policy on "engineered foods." We're getting more nourishment into the foods distributed to needy families through our Commodity Distribution Program. We're dedicated to bold innovations, and we'll have many more of them to tell you about, when you come back next year.

Now, this has been somewhat of a report to you from your Food and Nutrition Service. I think what we are doing here is terribly important, and hope you share this concern. We thank you for the tools -- the legislation,

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the appropriations. But above all we are thankful for your concern and for the help that you have given us and that I know we can look for, in this common effort to reach the goal that President Nixon has set for all Americans.

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FAMILY FOOD PROGRAMS: Counties and Independent Cities Without Programs

Counties 258

Independent Cities 8

TOTAL 266

COLORADO

Douglas

Jackson

Pitkin

FLORIDA

Charlotte

Citrus

Flagler

Indian River

Marion

Martin

Nassau

Osceola

Putnam

St. Johns

KANSAS

Barber

Brown

Butler

Chase

Cheyenne

Clay

Cloud

Coffey

Comanche

Doniphan

Edwards

Ellis

Finney

Geary

Gove

Gray

Greeley

Harvey

Haskell

Jewell

Kiowa

Lane

Logan

Marion

Marshall

Mitchell

Morton

Nemaha

Ness

Norton

Osage

Osborne

Ottawa

Pawnee

Pottawatomie

Pratt

Rawlins

Republic

Rice

Riley

Rooks

Rush

Russell

Scott

Seward

Sheridan

Smith

Stafford

Stanton

Stevens

Sumner

Thomas

Trego

Wabaunsee

Wallace

Washington

Wichita

LOUISIANA

Bossier
Plaquemines
Terrebonne

MASSACHUSETTS

Barnstable
Dukes
Nantucket

MINNESOTA

Clay	Olmsted
Dodge	Watsonwan
Fillmore	Wilkin
Martin	Winona

MISSOURI

Andrew	Henry	Saline
Atchison	Holt	
Audrain	Howard	Vernon
Barton	Jasper	
Bates	Johnson	
Boone	Laclede	
Callaway	Lafayette	
Camden	Macon	
Carroll	Miller	
Cass	Moniteau	
Cedar	Morgan	
Chariton		
Cole	Pettis	
Cooper	Phelps	
Crawford	Platte	
Franklin	Pulaski	
Gasconade	Ray	

MONTANA

Carbon
Golden Valley
Madison
Stillwater

NEBRASKA

	Red Willow
Grant	Saline
Kimball	Sioux
Polk	

NEVADA

Esmeralda
Storey

NORTH CAROLINA

Randolph

NORTH DAKOTA

Bowman
Renville
Slope

OHIO

Fairfield
Hancock
Putnam

OKLAHOMA

Beaver
Harmon
Major
Woods

TEXAS

Andrews	Johnson
Aransas	Kaufman
Archer	Kendall
Armstrong	Kenedy
Bailey	Kerr
Bandera	Lamar
Baylor	Lampasas
Bell	Llano
Blanco	Loving
Borden	McCulloch
Bosque	McMullen
Bowie	Mason
Briscoe	Menard
Castro	Mills
	Navarro
Clay	Ochiltree
Coleman	Oldham
Collin	Palo Pinto
Collingsworth	Parmer
Colorado	Presidio
Concho	Randall
Coryell	Reagan
Crane	Reeves
Crockett	Refugio
Deaf Smith	Roberts
Denton	Rockwall
Donley	Runnels
Ector	Rusk
Edwards	San Saba
Ellis	Shackelford
Erath	Sherman
Fort Bend	Somervell
Garza	Stephens
Gillespie	Sterling
Glasscock	Sutton
Gray	Throckmorton
Gregg	Uvalde
Hall	Van Zandt
Hansford	Wheeler
Harrison	Winkler
Hartley	Wise
Hood	Wood
Hopkins	Yoakum
Jack	Young

VIRGINIA

Alleghany	King William
Augusta	Lancaster
Bedford	Loudoun
Botetourt	Mathews
Campbell	
Chesterfield	New Kent
Clarke	Orange
Culpeper	Prince George
Fauquier	Pulaski
Frederick	Rockingham
Hanover	Shenandoah
Henrico	Spotsylvania
James City	Stafford
King George	

Independent Cities

Colonial Heights

Covington

Fredericksburg

Harrisonburg

Petersburg

Radford

Staunton

Winchester

WISCONSIN

Green Lake

Jefferson

Walworth