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## BOOK NOTES

**The State of Food and Agriculture 1960**, Food and Agriculture Organization. Rome: 1960. Pp. viii, 182, 10s. 0d. (Stg.)

This annual survey of world conditions and prospects was first prepared in 1948 as a basic document for inter-governmental consultations on plans and programs at the FAO Annual Conference, but it is also addressed to the general public. It has the characteristic high standard of presentation one tends to take for granted in FAO publications.

After an analytical foreword by the Director-General, the contents are carefully summarized in Chapter I. This section is therefore a concise statement of the most pertinent facts in the world agricultural situation.

Chapter II contains the World Review and Outlook. It is divided into sections the first of which covers agricultural production, from the point of view of population, patterns, regions, outlook, variability and trends. There has been a fall in the increase in food production from 5 per cent per annum to 2 per cent in 1959-60, but this is still slightly ahead of population growth. The biggest increase has been in Western Europe and the Far East, and the latter has reached a stage of being only 3 per cent below pre-war per caput output. Livestock have increased more rapidly than cropping in more developed countries, and vice-versa in less developed countries.

Other sections cover changes in stocks, the demand for agricultural products, food supplies and consumption, farm prices and incomes, consumer prices and sales and international trade in agricultural produce. International trade showed an increase of 6 per cent in the value of rural exports in 1959-60. This increase is partly attributable to recovery from the recession of 1957-58 and hence raw materials which were the most severely affected, have shown an increase of 11 per cent.

A further section deals with policies and development plans. The various policies "reflect the contrast between the supply and demand situation in industrialized and less developed countries". Supply can expand rapidly in industrialized countries but the increase in demand is not for agricultural products, as there is already a high level of food consumption. In less developed countries supply increase is slow but demand growth is for agricultural products. Developed countries have as their principal aim to adjust output to home demand and export markets and at the same time to equalize rural and industrial incomes. There has been a tendency towards reducing costly price support schemes and the adoption of methods to raise farm incomes by increased efficiency. In less developed countries there has been more emphasis on protecting the consumer and avoiding inflation. The final section of the chapter presents a set of short notes on the situation and outlook for each of the main agricultural, fishery and forest products. The position of each is summarized in table form.

The third chapter, entitled "Programming for Agricultural Development", presents a review of procedures and methods used by governments to promote agricultural development. It is an impressive record of the means and procedures which have been developed and tried by FAO in assisting member governments with their domestic rural programs. The chapter

discusses the scope, objective and special problems of programming for development, with reference to the nature of plans and policies in countries at different stages of economic development. Some special problems are considered which are common to agriculture but seldom arise in other sectors of an economy.

Particular reference is made to the establishment of agricultural targets, by projection of requirements for food and other products, and by other means based on technical and local possibilities. Also emphasis is placed on the choice of means to implement production targets. This involves direct investment in projects like irrigation and land settlement, measures to increase farmers, incentive to expand production, and the provision of improved services to agriculture including research and extension services.

The contents of this last chapter are of great importance when one considers that these programs affect mainly the less developed countries where there is a rapid population growth rate; where agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, and also the sector where poverty is most acute; where food consumption levels are low and there is need for nutritional improvement; where there is a need to increase rural exports and decrease imports to release foreign exchange for the purchase of capital goods. The importance of these programs being put into practice is emphasized, as unless "plans can be translated into reality . . . they are little more than an academic exercise". The chapter is an important discussion of the development of domestic agricultural policy, a field in which FAO has had unique experience.