

# Purse Strings Tightening On NASA Programs

By Harry F. Rosenthal  
WASHINGTON (AP)—After enjoying lavish funds in the '60s for its exotic forays into space, NASA is beginning the '70s with

a purse drawn so tight it can barely stay aloft. It won the '60s race with the Russians; it is losing out to the national needs of the '70s.

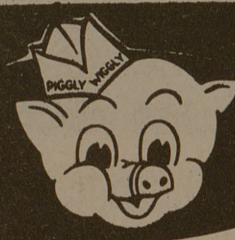
Its already shrunken work force is being cut by 50,000 people. Other curtailments may signal an indefinite delay in sending men to Mars and a slowdown by at least a year in the next big space moves—building a space shuttle and advanced earth stations. To save money, the space agency will stretch out its moon landing flights to two a year for the seven flights remaining, skipping 1972 entirely. It will postpone a planned unmanned landing on Mars by at least two years and order no more Saturn 5 rockets beyond the eight being built or nearing completion. In the manner of a man discussing the terminal illness of a close friend, administrator Thom-

as O. Paine announced the cuts Tuesday, saying he is "taking actions to redirect portions of our space program to bring NASA's total operations in line with the budget which we will work with in fiscal 1971." With three moon flights in the current fiscal year, NASA's spending will be about \$3.6 billion, down from a high of \$5.25 billion in 1965 and \$5.175 billion in 1966. "NASA can move forward strongly while still achieving greater economy in 1971," Paine said. "While we will be reducing our total effort, we will not dissipate the strong teams that sent men to explore the moon and automated spacecraft to observe

the planets." Paine pointed out the agency already has announced closing of its Electronics Research Center in Cambridge, Mass. "We estimate," he added, "that the total number of Americans working in NASA programs will decline from 190,000 at the end of fiscal year 1970 to about 140,000 at the end of fiscal year 1971." Last September, while the nation still was flushed with the success of the Apollo 11 first landing on the moon, President Nixon received recommendations from his task group on space goals. It listed three choices, all incorporating development of the space shuttle—an airplane-like

craft able to fly into space and return repeatedly—and the advanced space station, to house 100 persons. Two of the options envisioned landing men on Mars in the 1980s. The third left the timetable open. It was known the President favored a progressive program and the announcement was expected about Christmas. A budget allocation of \$3.8 billion—enough to get started on the long-range goals—was thought possible for the next fiscal year. But following passage of the tax reform bill the President took soundings of the mood of the people, White House sources say, and apparently found, going to the moon for more rocks was not

of high priority. As a result, there is still a chance he may cut off some moon flights. Paine indicated the new budget would provide some money for design studies for both the space shuttle and space station. But failure to include money to start buying hardware will delay that program at least by a year. It will cost about \$8 billion to develop a space shuttle—necessary to transport men and supplies to space stations. The lack of activity already has sent space workers by the hundreds looking for other jobs and the drop-off is bound to continue—posing grave problems in rebuilding the teams should the pace quicken again.



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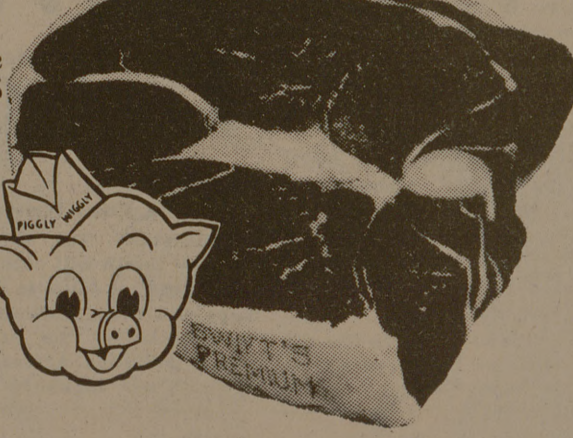
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