

# Program trades food, work Hurricane dangerous game

**Associated Press**  
ROME — Once the world's symbol of starvation, Bangladesh could become self-sufficient in food in five years time thanks to an innovative food-for-work program, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports.

Under the food-for-work program started by the government at the start of 1975 to reduce food hand-outs, a worker is paid six pounds of wheat for each ton of earth he moves in the dredging of canals and the construction of levees. Some two million men and boys took part in the program this year.

FAO, a principal sponsor of the program, reports some 1,500 miles of canals and 1,850 miles of embankments already have been completed. All this is being done to control the disastrous flooding that occurs each year during the monsoon season and use the water instead for controlled irrigation of one of the most naturally fertile delta regions in the world.

## Radar used to explore salt domes

Dr. Robert Unterberger sports a suntan that belies the amount of time he has spent underground during the last decade "squirting radar through salt."

The Texas A&M University professor of geophysics has become the world's expert on this method of exploring the perimeters and tops of salt domes to keep mines productive and miners safe.

While salt isn't quite the commodity it was during the middle ages (certain officials were designated as keepers-of-the-salt) it is still valuable enough to risk mining hundreds of feet below the Gulf of Mexico where a cut too close to the outside of a dome could result in a flooded multi-million dollar mine.

Dr. Unterberger has been globe-trotting during vacations and breaks hauling a portable radar set and an entourage of graduate students developing his methods of prognostication — "prediction is the essence of science," he said.

However, one thing has stymied his radar. Water.

"There are a few cases of salt mines that are wet," he explained. "To be considered wet requires a water content of only one-tenth of one per cent. At this level no electromagnetic waves will penetrate it."

"Water has a dipole moment which causes it to be agitated by these waves rather than letting them slip through," Unterberger said. "This is the same reason that a radar range works. The water reacts and cooks whatever it is in. If something were completely dry the radar range wouldn't work."

"Our immediate problem then became to find something that would work," he said. "We remembered that when we were in the mines workers could be heard drilling 600 feet above us. The idea then formed to use sonar. The Navy had been using it for many years to pick up underwater sounds and objects and to compute their distances."

"We started a literature search and discovered that almost no one had done any research in the transfer of sound waves through rock," Unterberger said. "So, we procured a sonar unit and took it to try out on the dry Grand Saline salt mine located east of Dallas."

The device was placed against the wall with padding and castor oil in between and bolted in place on the rock face of the mine.

"On the first try we got through 1,250 feet rock with sound," he said. "So, the next step was to see how much success we'd have in a 'wet mine.'"

Belle Isle in Louisiana, located 1,500 feet under the Gulf, was chosen for the research. Previous research had failed there and information was needed to expand the mining activities.

Success rode with Unterberger and his graduate assistant Ken Butler. After some initial trials they managed to achieve 400 feet of penetration which they are trying to improve on now. This is 400 feet more than they were able to search before, allowing work to continue in the mine in safety.

"In addition to the borders of the salt domes we can search out faults, layers of water in the salt and other dangerous situations," Unterberger continued.

The eventual success of the program could mean life itself for hundreds of thousands of the 80 million people squeezed into this country the size of the State of Iowa.

"It is really amazing what the country has done in such a short time. More earth has been dug up for the canals and embankments than was dug for the building of the Panama Canal," says Trevor Page, world food program adviser in Bangladesh. "At this rate, and with increased food production and crop surpluses, Bangladesh could become self-sufficient in food in five years."

The country's dependence on foreign food imports has, in fact, begun to drop. Rice and wheat production increased from 10.1 million tons in 1974-75 to an estimated 11.9 million tons in 1975-76. This cut imports from 2.3 million tons to 1.5 million tons.

Food-for-work provided useful occupation for one out of four of the country's seven million unemployed and contributed to a change in direction for the nation's economy. The FAO said for the first time since Bangladesh became independent

from Pakistan in 1971, the gross national product rose in 1975-76 by an estimated 12 per cent and per capita income went up 9 per cent, although the average income is still under \$100 per year.

Bangladesh lies on a delta formed by the Ganges and the Brahmaputra rivers as they flow down from the Himalaya mountains. The rivers deposit some 2.5 billion tons of silt each year, making the delta one of the world's most fertile regions but also filling up river and canal beds.

From June to October each year, the rivers are flooded by monsoon rains, causing death and destruction. A 1974 flood covered two-thirds of the country and killing 2,000 persons, and scores of persons have died this year in less serious flooding.

By February, when crops can be grown without the danger of floods, water becomes so scarce that crops cannot flourish.

"Water is our major problem. Either we have too much of it or too little," said an official in Dacca. "If we can control our water, we can avoid the disasters that periodically bring so much misery and suffering to our people."

By MILLER H. BONNER, JR.  
Associated Press

**SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, Tex.** — Residents and investors on this popular island resort are playing hurricane roulette — a dangerous annual game where losers lose millions. And the real losers lose their lives.

"It's really a big question mark," muses building inspector John Armeau. "We'll just have to wait until the next big blow comes through." Although weathermen warn that a major hurricane would cover Padre Island with five feet or more of angry ocean waves, residents are betting their fortunes it'll never happen.

The last "big blow" to move over the island was Hurricane Beulah in September 1967 and it caused no deaths. But since then, the island town has experienced a building boom.

Since 1973, when South Padre Island became an incorporated city, more than \$27 million in building permits have been granted.

The town — five miles long and two miles wide — sits approximately two miles off the Texas mainland across from Isabel.

Although the island's population is "about 400," the sun-splashed stretch of beach annually attracts thousands of tourists.

Armeau said the town is currently rewriting its building codes trying "to get building designs that complement mother nature. But we're just playing the odds."

And the odds are formidable according to information supplied by Al Dreumont, the meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service in Brownsville. Fortunately, hurricanes pose a threat for only three or four months of each year.

"There have been 26 tropical storms within 100 miles of Brownsville since 1900," Dreumont said. "Of those 26, three have made landfall in this area. The National Hurricane Center in Miami has predicted the conditions that might accompany a severe hurricane like Camillo (1969) whose winds exceeded 200 miles per hour."

"If a Camillo-type storm hits this area, the water surge waves that proceed the eye of a hurricane is estimated at 12 feet for Brownsville and Port Isabel," he said.

"When the water rises two feet on

South Padre I've got to get the people off the island. When the water hits five feet, most of the island will be under water. Dreumont said nine of every 10 hurricane deaths are caused by drowning.

"If a 12-foot water surge hits the island," he added, "the lesser structures on the island such as single-story, one-family dwellings will probably be destroyed. The multi-story structures should survive."

Dreumont said such a surge is devastating. "You figure one cubic yard of water weighs 1,500 pounds and with 100 to 200 m.p.h. winds behind it, you've got a very destructive force."

"The crucial months for hurricanes in this area is August and September," he noted. "That's not saying we can't have one in July or October but the probability is very slim."

"Nothing will sneak up on us. Our radar covers a 250-mile span. The people will have plenty of warning."

Should Dreumont recommend — he does not have the authority to order — the evacuation of South Padre Island, the town's officials have a battle plan.

"We have just passed an ordinance that requires every person evacuate in case of such a warning," said the island's police chief, G. Beauford. "In addition to the reports over radio and TV, we will contact every person at least twice and get them to get off the island."

"We have designated highway routes to the inland cities for people and have color-coded permits for residents and businessmen returning to the island which should keep out the looters."

"The public utilities — electric water and gas — will be turned off," he said. "We'll lock this office and get the hell outta here."

Beauford has an added incentive for quick evacuation. City Hall and his office — sit "a little more than two feet above sea level."

Despite the seasonal threat of hurricanes and tropical storms, long time residents of the island take the danger in stride.

"Look at the poor people in the nado areas," said Mrs. D. H. Christensen, a 28-year resident and the bookkeeper for one of the island resort hotels.

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