

Land damage to hurt food production: study

United Press International — WASHINGTON — Deterioration of the world's productive soil will impair world food production by the year 2000, according to a new Agriculture Department study.

The study, "Impact of Land Degradation on Future World Food Production," was published by the international economics division of the Agriculture Department's Economic Research Service.

The study predicted that per capita food production would increase in developed nations in North America, Europe and Australia. It said those nations might improve land management and even reverse moderate land degradation, or desertification, that has occurred.

But prospects for other parts of the world are gloomier. The majority of developing nations, primarily in Africa, Asia and Central and South America, will have difficulty increasing food production, the study said.

It would be possible to halt or reverse desertification in all but small land areas of those nations, the study said. However, degradation of soil in those nations is frequently overlooked and reversal costs would be high.

"This, combined with the additional expense of expanding cultivation to new lands, will make it difficult for these developing nations to increase food production to meet rising populations," the study said.

The author, Harold Dregne, is director of the International Center for Arid and Semi-arid

Land Studies at Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

Dregne discussed desertification caused by water and wind erosion, waterlogging and salinization, compaction of soil, surface crusting and destruction of plant cover. The problems can result from excessive cutting of

Severe desertification in North America is mostly an arid-land problem, affecting Texas, New Mexico and Arizona in the United States — Agriculture Department study.

1974, plans to develop a method to determine the present rate of degradation. But Dregne said that goal is still several years off.

Dregne estimated that 62 percent of land in the world has slight desertification problems, 26 percent has moderate problems, 12 percent has severe manifestations and 0.1 percent has very severe problems.

If the problems are slight, crop yields are reduced less than 10 percent, and if problems are severe, yields are reduced 50 percent to 90 percent, he estimated.

"Desertification will affect food production by the year 2000," Dregne concluded.

Severe desertification in North America is mostly an arid-land problem, affecting Texas, New Mexico and Arizona in the United States and Mexican states from Oaxaca in the south to Sonora and Chihuahua in the north, he said.

Water erosion has severely damaged land in the mountains of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, cutting into food production in those nations for the foreseeable future, the study said.

Severe degradation of rangeland and cropland is most extensive in Africa north of the equator and in Southwest Asia, the study said.

"Large parts of China, the Soviet Union, Greece, Spain, the United States, Mexico, Central America and the Andean countries of South America have also suffered much land degradation," Dregne said.

forests, overgrazing, cultivation of sloping or shallow soils and irrigation without drainage.

In extreme cases, the land becomes useless for humans and animals.

Estimating rates of land degradation, Dregne's study features maps showing the severity of desertification on each continent compared to the potential land productivity of each area.

His maps show where the problems are the greatest, but actual worldwide rates of desertification are impossible to determine reliably because of a lack of information.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, which has studied soil degradation since

What's Up at A&M

Thursday

AGRICULTURE ECONOMICS CLUB: Meeting to discuss computers in agriculture and officer elections at 7 p.m. in 209 Harrington.

MSC AMATEUR RADIO COMMITTEE: Meeting to discuss Aggiecross at 7:30 p.m. in 140 MSC. There will be a scrapping party afterwards.

CEPHEID VARIABLE: "Heavy Metal" will be shown at 7:30 p.m. and 9:45 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY: Women's bible study will be at 7:30 p.m. at 1002 Pershing St.

CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST: Leadership training class will be at 7:30 p.m. in 108 Harrington. Everyone is welcome.

UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHAPEL: We will leave for Sherwood Nursing Home to sing and visit at 6:30 p.m. from the chapel, 315 N. College Main.

TAMU MICROCOMPUTER CLUB: Dr. Johnson's "The Finite Element" will be continued at 7:30 p.m. in 106 Highway Research Center.

MSC OUTDOOR RECREATION COMMITTEE: "Free Climb" with Robert Redford will be shown at 7:30 p.m. in 501 Rudder.

CATHOLIC STUDENTS ASSOCIATION: Inquiry Class II will meet at 6 p.m. in the student center. The adoration of the

Friday

blessed sacrament will be at 7 a.m. in St. Mary's Church. An off-campus mass will be at 10 p.m. in the Old College Main party house.

HILLEL JEWISH STUDENT CENTER: Services will be held by Dr. Yechiel Weitsman followed by a Homen Yashen (Oneg Shabat) at 8 p.m. in the center.

TAMU CHESS CLUB: Players of all strengths are welcome meeting at 7 p.m. 410 Rudder.

UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY: Friday night bible study will be at 6:30 p.m. Check MSC video for room number.

FIFTH BATTALION: There will be a Beach Party at Q-Hall from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. All girls free!

MSC CAMERA: First day of accepting prints for Salon '82 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the first floor tables of the MSC.

CATHOLIC STUDENTS ASSOCIATION: Coffeehouse—the group "Southwind" will perform at 8 p.m. in the student center.

Saturday

SOCIETY OF IRANIAN STUDENTS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ASSOCIATION: Dr. Kukab Sidiq will lecture on the Middle East: Other Perspectives at 7 p.m. in 102 Zachry. The program will be preceded by the student panelists from Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

Uneasy Senate committee begins budget resolution

United Press International — WASHINGTON — The Republican-led Senate Budget Committee, tired of waiting for guidance from the White House, began work on a 1983 budget resolution by rejecting the optimistic predictions in President Reagan's spending plan.

The committee voted, 13-1, at its first mark-up hearing Tuesday to use the more pessimistic economic assumptions supplied by the Congressional Budget Office.

The lone dissenter was Sen. Bob Kasten, R-Wis., who argued the panel "could be making a real mistake by rejecting the base of the administration's numbers. By throwing out the administration's economics, we are starting out on the least rosy scenario."

But committee Chairman Pete Domenici, R-N.M., said he

believes the CBO approach "permits us to work with a set of numbers that are reliable."

The "economic assumptions" are estimates of the future.

Reagan's budget predicts the interest rate on a three-month Treasury bill will drop to 11.7 percent this year and 10.5 percent in 1983, while the CBO (Congressional Budget Office) estimates it will be 12.4 percent in 1982 and 13.2 percent next year.

and are used to figure out future costs in the budget.

For example, Reagan's budget predicts the interest rate on a three-month Treasury bill will drop to 11.7 percent this year and 10.5 percent in 1983, while the CBO estimates it will be 12.4 percent in 1982 and 13.2 percent next year.

The latest six-month Treasury bill yield is about 13.5 percent, up this week from about 12.9 percent. For interest rates to decline, economists say inflation must be curbed.

Senate Republican leaders had delayed committee action on the budget to see if negotiations between House Democrats and the White House would produce a bipartisan compromise plan, but Tuesday they decided time was running out.

Under the Budget Act, the Senate must pass a budget resolution by April 15 and both

House and Senate must agree on one by May 15.

Domenici said it is possible—but not probable—the committee could finish work on a budget resolution by the weekend, the start of the 12-day Easter recess.

"We want to send a signal that we are concerned and we want to move ahead," Domenici told reporters.

In opening the first hearing Domenici held hope Reagan would indicate what changes he might accept in his \$757.6 billion budget proposal.

But other Republicans, including Sen. William Armstrong of Colorado, said they could not wait forever for Reagan to send them a conciliatory signal.

"The White House has sent us a signal (that's) undesirable," Armstrong said.

U.S.-China stance shaky

Sales to Taiwan hurt ties

United Press International — PEKING — The United States and China were locked on a collision course over U.S. military sales to Taiwan Wednesday and Western diplomats said a downgrading of relations appeared inevitable.

U.S. officials in Washington Tuesday said the Reagan administration would press ahead with a \$60 million military spare-parts sale to Taiwan.

The development, combined with a stiffening Chinese posture, convinced most diplomats in Peking the two sides were within weeks of a severe downgrading of diplomatic relations.

"The time has now come," one veteran diplomat said. "Once this deal is made public, in the sense it is presented to Congress, all the signs are there from the Chinese side that they are not bluffing."

Diplomats regard the \$60 million deal as the acid test of China's often-stated threat to downgrade ties with the United States over Washington's military support for Taiwan, which Peking considers part of China.

The Chinese are expected to wait for the deal to win routine congressional approval after a 30-day wait, before withdrawing their ambassador from

Washington and sending U.S. Ambassador Arthur Hummel packing.

"They will move to downgrade diplomatic relations as a result of this sale," the diplomat said. "I'd be really surprised if that's not the way it works. They can't be bluffing. They've painted themselves into a corner."

U.S. officials in Washington said a specific decision on how to execute the \$60 million deal was expected "soon" and the package could be submitted to Congress by mid-April.

The officials said the Reagan administration realizes arms sales to Taiwan is a sensitive issue for Peking, but cannot allow China's objections to stand in the way.

They said meetings will be held in coming weeks to attempt to defuse Chinese opposition, but it was not clear whether they would be in addition to secret discussions already under way in Peking.

The Sino-American dispute has spread with Chinese objections extending to include "unofficial" American ties with Taiwan and a new immigration law for Taiwan-born immigrants.

China delivered a formal protest note to the American Embassy in Peking Friday "demanding" the new immigration law, which sets quotas for 20,000 visas each to Taiwan-born and mainland-born Chinese, be "corrected."

"This is an open act of creating 'two Chinas' on the part of the United States," the protest note said.

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