

## Agriculture by Susan B. Cohen

### Secretary Block tours Europe

*The U.S.-West German science cooperation agreement is only one of the high points.*

In what the West German press has hailed as "part of international efforts to solve the world food problems," U.S. Agriculture Secretary John Block and West German Agriculture Minister Josef Ertl signed an agreement for scientific cooperation in food, agriculture, and forestry last week in Bonn.

It was one of the high points of Secretary Block's 12-day European tour that began with a presentation of American policy at the seventh ministerial session of the World Food Council in Belgrade on May 26, and continued with business-oriented get-acquainted visits with government leaders and agricultural officials in Brussels, London, and Paris, in addition to Bonn. The trip is part of the administration's broad international diplomacy, and is specifically aimed at re-establishing and expanding productive trading relations with major trading partners soured by the Carter embargo fiasco. Prior to leaving for Europe, Block dispatched a government-industry export promotion team to Latin America, and trade missions to northern Africa and China are planned.

Secretary Block's address to the World Food Council distinctly separated U.S. policy from the "one-worldist" program for so-called world food banks and other forms of global food-supply manipulation ritually promoted by the World Food Council since its birth at the Rome World Food Confer-

ence in 1974. Block emphasized the need for both developed and developing countries to create their own food reserves, to build up the necessary storage infrastructure within their own countries as part of developing a viable agricultural economy. The United States has led with its grain reserve policy, he said, but cannot continue to carry the burden for maintaining world food reserves alone. The U.S. rejects international coordination and control of such reserves, Secretary Block made clear.

The agreement with West Germany coheres with this policy orientation; it is a good example of the constructive relations Secretary Block is demonstrably forging with our European allies. The agreement stipulated that the two countries will coordinate and share research in several crucial areas, among them production storage, waste recycling, and energy problems. West Germany has advanced technical approaches to certain research problems the United States recognizes as key, Secretary Block noted in Bonn, and it would be a costly mistake to duplicate efforts.

Agriculture Minister Ertl is a key tactical ally of West German Chancellor Schmidt. West German agriculture, like the Schmidt government, has been under siege by "greenie" environmentalists associated with Willy Brandt's Socialist International. A member of the ruling coalition partner party, the Free

Democrats, Ertl recently delivered a memorable defense of high-technology agriculture against the zero-growth fanatics within the FDP. "The forests which our greenies of today fight so hard for are in fact a product of the industrial revolution," Ertl told the convention, adding that before the industrial revolution European agriculture stagnated and the continent suffered deforestation.

Secretary Block also visited Brussels, where he conferred with European Community (EC) Agriculture Commissioner Dalsager. There were several areas of U.S. concern regarding possible EC tariffs on American feedstuffs and the perennial annoyance the U.S. feels over the EC's generous export-credit program for wheat and other surplus agriculture goods.

But Block made it clear that the United States considers the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), which is the target of disruptive British free-trade attacks, an "internal matter" of the EC. He emphasized that the U.S. fully intended to remain competitive in agricultural markets, and would fight all-out to maintain and expand its market share.

A commitment to "full consultation" on any problem was made, and Block also received assurances that the EC's 10,000 ton quota on high-quality beef imports from the U.S. would be upheld in the face of Canadian efforts to sabotage the trade plan by demanding "equal access" to the quota.

The other high point of the tour was the secretary's announcement in London that U.S.-Soviets talks on grain sales this year and a new long-term agreement would resume in that city on June 8.