

Agriculture by Marcia Merry

Move for 'sustainable' farming under way

Followup meetings to the Rio Earth Summit focus on the IMF-World Bank agenda for destroying agriculture.

In June 1994, a worldwide conference is envisaged on the theme of "sustainable agriculture." The event, originally scheduled for this June in Minneapolis, is designed as a follow-up to the June 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Last January, the conference was rescheduled, in order to provide time for a bigger mobilization, according to Linda Elswick of the Washington, D.C.-based World Sustainable Agriculture Association.

The intended conference has been billed as dealing with food security and caring for planet Earth. As described by Noel Brown, the regional director for the U.N. Environment Program based in New York City, agriculture "is the best barometer of what we are doing to the land."

However, the true purpose of such meetings is to plan out propaganda campaigns to confuse and demoralize the public into acquiescing to ferocious economic austerity. The very term "sustainable," as it has come into use to describe low-cost, low-input, minimum-infrastructure farming, is the cynical concoction of private interests which are demanding austerity of populations worldwide.

Over the last three decades, private financial and political interests associated with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the commodities cartel companies, and related entities, have demanded more and more looting rights in the form of cheap labor and cheap goods—"free trade"—and they have opposed economic development of basic infrastructure, such as power production, water management, transportation,

and sanitation. Their objective is to exact deeper debt service payments.

To rationalize their demands, they have mobilized academics, Hollywood, and the mass media to put forward the bogus idea that the only "sustainable" economic activity is that which requires little advanced technology. The result of this policy is seen in the decline in food output per capita in Africa and South America, and in the resurgence of once all-but-conquered diseases around the globe, and in the scourge of AIDS.

Contrary to the propaganda about so-called sustainable low-energy-state economic activity, only by increasing energy availability per hectare and per household can one facilitate ever more advanced forms of production, and thus make human societies truly sustainable, while enhancing the environment at the same time.

The traditional technology-proud U.S. farmer, given a decent price for his production, access to extended education, and adequate infrastructure, can improve yields per hectare, and build up the productivity of the natural resource base at the same time. Thus, successive advances in technology, energy, and changes in the resource base have been the true foundation for agricultural "sustainability."

But in recent decades, in which farmers have been underpaid and lacking the means to make improvements, the entire society has suffered, and environmental degradation has spread.

Yet the IMF-World Bank propagandists say: You must make do with even less energy and technology, in the name of "sustainability" on Earth.

Hollywood movies extol Amish 17th-century techniques, or the pre-agricultural hunting and gathering societies in the Amazon.

There is a huge mobilization in the United States to stuff this down the farmer's craw! On April 29-30, a meeting was convened in Washington, of representatives from the International Federation of Agriculture Producers, to which the Denver-based National Farmers Union (NFU) and its counterparts in 25 countries belong. The focus, as stated by Bo Dockered, chairman of the IFAP's Environmental Committee and president of the Federation of Swedish Farmers, was to formulate proposals that promote sustainable agriculture. Participating shoulder-to-shoulder with the erstwhile farm representatives were officials from the World Bank, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the academic anti-technology types from World Watch Institute, the Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska, Cornell University, and other groups.

NFU President Leland Swenson urged farm groups to work with the World Bank. He noted approvingly how "environmental concerns have risen to the top of many international organizations' agendas."

The June 1994 world meeting on sustainable agriculture had been set for Minneapolis because it is the seat of influence of the commodities cartels associated with IMF-World Bank circles. Minnesota is home to Cargill, and home territory for Dwayne Andreas, former Cargill vice president and now head of the Archer Daniels Midland cartel company, which has been in cahoots with certain NFU officials to loot the U.S. farmer for decades. The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, a cartel front group based in Minneapolis, has volunteered to host the worldwide conference.