

Chapter VIII

Agriculture in the War on Poverty

On October 8, 1968, the much debated extension of the Food Stamp Act of 1964 was approved. 1/ The Act extended authority for the program through December 31, 1970 and raised the ceiling for appropriations from \$225 million to \$315 million for fiscal year 1969. It authorized appropriations of \$340 million for fiscal year 1970 and \$170 million for the six months ending December 31, 1970.

The Department of Agriculture and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, approved August 8, 1968, had provided \$225 million in direct appropriations and had authorized in addition the use of \$45 million of Section 32 funds for child feeding programs and "additional distribution or other programs, without regard to whether such area is under the food stamp program or a system of direct distribution to provide. . . an adequate diet to other needy children and low income persons. . . suffering, through no fault of their own, from general and continued hunger resulting from insufficient food." 2/

Anticipating enactment of the Food Stamp legislation, Secretary Freeman appealed to Jamie Whitten, Chairman of the Department of Agriculture and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee of the House, for favorable action on a request for a \$90 million supplemental appropriation for the Food Stamp Program. 3/ Mr. Freeman stating his con-

1/ 82 Stat. 958.

2/ 82 Stat. 639.

3/ Letter to Jamie Whitten from Orville L. Freeman, October 4, 1968. In: Orville L. Freeman Chronological File in Lyndon B. Johnson Library.

viction that program improvements should be implemented immediately. The supplemental funds would, he estimated, enable the Department to reach 1.5 million persons not served by the Food Stamp Program. The Secretary stated he had seen first-hand the hunger and malnutrition which "can only be rooted out by bringing the Food Stamp Program into new communities."

The Appropriations Committee of the House reported out a bill which provided a supplemental appropriation of \$20 million. 1/

Congressman Neal Smith introduced an amendment to raise the supplemental appropriation to \$90 million.2/ Congressman Reid of New York stated that Secretary Freeman's office had reported that a \$20 million appropriation would only fund the program at its current operating level.

Congressman Whitten objected to the Smith Amendment, stating that he had investigated every claim of hunger and starvation on an individual basis. 3/ He pointed out that the first request for a supplemental appropriation, as soon as authorized, was for \$20 million. He also said that when the Department's appropriation bill was passed, "no notice was taken of the extra \$50 million which we agreed on in our regular appropriation bill." During the course of the debate, Congressman Whitten made the following comment:

1/ U. S. Congress, 90th, 2nd Sess., House Report 1953.

2/ Congressional Record, October 9, 1968.

3/ Ibid.

I should like to point out that if people do not pay anything for food stamps they will not treat them with much care. Under the present situation they can get \$10 or \$12 worth of stamps for 50 cents in certain areas. . . . The Secretary can give them commodities. He can decide what to give, if he determines it is needed. Under the existing laws they have the right to do this.

When he feels that the people should pay something, he can cut the price to as low as 50 cents for \$10 or \$12 worth of stamps. Any price below that is almost like using stamps for wallpaper, or to play cards with them.

The Supplemental Appropriation Bill as passed by the House provided an appropriation of \$40 million for the Food Stamp Program. The Senate Bill provided the \$90 million requested by Secretary Freeman.

The amount included in the Supplemental Appropriations Act for 1969, approved October 21, 1968, was \$55 million. The additional expenditures were to be fully offset by the sale of notes held by the Commodity Credit Corporation or other assets of the Department of Agriculture. 1/

In the meantime, on October 16, 1968, Secretary Freeman had told those attending a conference on ending hunger in America that a supplementary package of free foods enriched to meet the special nutrition needs of pregnant women, mothers and infants, was being made available. The program was being introduced into counties with Food Stamp Programs as well as those with the donated food programs. 2/

1/ 82 Stat. 1190.

2/ Orville L. Freeman, To End Hunger in America, U. S. Department of Agriculture Press release 3253-68, October 16, 1968.

The program to provide special food supplements with emphasis on protein and iron enriched foods was to be carried on with the cooperation of health officials in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Office of Economic Opportunity. The program was operated through health clinics, hospitals and medical centers which were to determine who received the food supplements and what foods were needed. The Department of Agriculture provided free food. By January 8, 1969, the program which began to operate during November 1968, had been made available in 60 areas. Plans were to make it available nationwide as rapidly as possible. 1/

On November 14, 1968, Howard P. Davis, Deputy Administrator of the Consumer and Marketing Service, stated that some 500 of the Nation's 3,126 counties and independent cities were still without any plans to operate either a Food Stamp or food donation program. 2/ Four days later, Secretary Freeman announced designation of an additional 235 areas in 31 States to begin the Food Stamp Program during the current fiscal year. 3/ Newly-designated counties included 94 that had no food help program sponsored by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Exact dates when the areas designated would begin operation

1/ Orville L. Freeman, Testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, January 8, 1969, U. S. Department of Agriculture, unnumbered Press release, January 8, 1969. See also U. S. Department of Agriculture Press release 3567-68, November 14, 1968.

2/ U. S. Department of Agriculture Press release 3567-68, November 14, 1968.

3/ U. S. Department of Agriculture Press release 3628-68, November 18, 1968.

were to be announced later locally. On December 11, 1968, Secretary Freeman stated that there were still about 480 counties where no food program was available or planned. 1/

After consultation with Extension leaders, Secretary Freeman decided to use \$10 million of Section 32 Funds during the fiscal year 1969 for a nutrition education program to be carried out by the State Extension Services. Around 5,000 full or part-time aides selected from low income families were to carry out the educational programs in their home communities under the supervision of the regular home economists of the State Extension Services. 2/

that
On December 10, 1968, Secretary Freeman announced/a liberalization of the Food Stamp Program, to take effect in February 1969, would benefit more than 500,000 persons. 3/ Families with incomes under \$70 a month were to get more food help for less cash. For example, a family with a monthly income of \$20 in Virginia would receive \$58 worth of stamps in place of the \$48 received with a purchase of two dollars worth of stamps.

1/ U. S. Department of Agriculture Press release 3849-68, December 11, 1968.

2/ Letter to Senator Spessard L. Holland from Orville Freeman, December 4, 1968; letter to Congressman Jamie L. Whitten, December 5, 1968, from Orville L. Freeman; Letter to Orville L. Freeman from Torlief S. Aasheim, Director Montana Cooperative Extension Service, December 2, 1968. In: Orville L. Freeman Chronological File in Lyndon B. Johnson Library.

3/ U. S. Department of Agriculture Press release 3848-68, December 10, 1968 and Press release 3849-68, December 11, 1968.

Secretary Freeman also announced that the U. S. Department of Agriculture was putting together a complete model food package in five model cities in cooperation with the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and of Health, Education and Welfare. 1/

This announcement was followed on December 13, 1968, by a revision in the National School Lunch Program to help local schools provide more free and reduced price lunches to children from needy families. 2/ A higher reimbursement rate would be provided for schools reaching needy children. Under an optional formula, schools serving specially needy areas could receive up to 25 cents additional for each free or reduced price lunch served.

Secretary Freeman announced on December 30, 1968, that \$288 million in donated foods from the Department of Agriculture were assured for the School Lunch Program. 3/ He also said that food donations to needy families were being expanded. These provided more than 36 pounds per person per month compared with about 25 pounds a year earlier.

In the meantime, criticism of the Department for not reaching all hungry and malnourished people continued to increase. It was charged that the food programs gave inadequate help to the hungry at a time when large

1/ U. S. Department of Agriculture Press release 3849-68, December 11, 1968.

2/ U. S. Department of Agriculture Press release 3898-68, December 13, 1968.

3/ U. S. Department of Agriculture Press release 4031-68, December 30, 1968.

payments were made to wealthy farmers. 1/

A group of New York lawyers under a Federal antipovertry grant sued the Government to obtain more adequate distribution of food by the Department of Agriculture. 2/ The lawyers of Columbia University's Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law filed separate suits in Federal District Courts in 26 States to establish a new legal doctrine that "hunger in the United States is illegal."

On November 20, 1968, the Washington Post indicated that the survey of hunger being made by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare would provide evidence that malnutrition, anemia, and retardation of growth among children existed in many areas of the United States. 3/

This news story was followed on January 13, 1968 by an article based on interviews with specialists who had completed the first phase of the survey. The report was scheduled to be released on January 16, 1969. Excerpts follow:

The 1,700,000 survey, authorized by Congress last spring and conducted by the U.S. Public Health Service, found 'very few' cases of acute hunger or starvation among the 10,000 subjects tested, the National Observer has learned. But vitamin and other deficiencies of varying degrees of severity were found to be widespread among the poor, with mental and physical retardation often the result.

1/ See Washington Post, October 13 and 14, 1968.

2/ See the Washington Daily News, November 19, 1968; New York Times, November 20, 1968, and the Washington Post, November 20, 1968.

3/ Washington Post, November 20, 1968.

'We found a few cases of diseases we didn't think even existed in the United States,' one survey official confided. Among these is kwashiorkor, a severe protein-deficiency disease common to underdeveloped countries.

The survey's findings, if projected on a national scale, would tend to support the controversial conclusions of a private citizens' group that last year estimated 10,000,000 Americans are victims, if not of severe hunger, at least of malnutrition.

The findings also, by implication, raise serious questions about the effectiveness of existing Government food programs, which are administered by the Department of Agriculture. Says one survey official: 'We were unable to find any significant difference in the nutritional levels of participants or non-participants in Federal food programs.'

The survey thus is expected to strengthen forces calling for bolder Federal action to feed many of the nation's 27,000,000 poor, only 6,000,000 of whom are currently beneficiaries of Government food programs.

Senator McGovern, Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, announced on December 16, 1968, that the Committee would begin hearings on the following day. Establishment of the Committee had been authorized on October 4, 1968.¹/Senator McGovern stated that over the past two years there had been "ample, if not scientific documentation of hunger in America." He indicted the Government: "It is disgraceful that bold emergency action has not yet been taken by our Government--a responsibility both past Administrations and the Congress must share--to get food to people we know are being permanently crippled or destroyed by malnutrition--on our Indian reservations, in Alaska, in

¹/ Statement, Senator George McGovern, Press release, Office of Senator George McGovern, December 16, 1968.

the hollows of Appalachia, in Beaufort City, South Carolina, San Antonio, Texas, the Mississippi Delta and in our cities across the land. Nearly two years ago, Robert Kennedy described that misery as worse than he had seen in South America."

Senator McGovern followed this indictment by an attack on farm policy on December 30, 1968. 1/ He pointed out that the Department was paying farmers \$3 billion a year not to produce and said: "I don't think that's a rational policy at a time when 10 million Americans are suffering from malnutrition." He suggested that the United States was placing too high a priority on landing on the moon quickly.

In his testimony before the McGovern Committee on January 8, 1969, Secretary Freeman defended the Department's administration of the food program. He said:

I urge this committee to distinguish clearly between commodity programs and food programs. They are different programs, developed to serve different purposes.

Let me repeat the key point: This nation has enough--more than enough--food. We can easily produce a great deal more. The single question that remains is whether we have the skill, ingenuity and determination to get the food to where it is needed.

That is, can we provide a delivery system which will work?

This is the real question which has engaged my attention as Secretary. I feel we have built a Federal system which, if two components are strengthened, will do the job. But, and I underscore this point, I am talking about a very big 'IF' -- If the programs are funded sufficiently; and If the State and local governments give as much support to this goal as does the Department of Agriculture. . . .

1/ Washington Post, December 30, 1968.

Today, one or the other family food assistance program is in operation or soon will be in 2,646 counties where over 83 percent of the American people live. Nearly 6.3 million persons are participating, and we anticipate that this number will increase to over 7 million by the end of this fiscal year.

Reaching the point where a food delivery system is available in all but 480 counties and independent cities has not been easy. For more than 6 of the past 8 years the effort has been fairly lonely. In the last two years, we have been joined by more and more supporters, and progress has been accelerating.

About a year and a half ago I began a project designed to insure that a food assistance program would be available in each of the counties which rank among the 1,000 with the lowest per capita income. At that time, over 330 of these counties did not have a food assistance program.

Recognizing that Congress had authorized the Food Stamp Program as a joint Federal-State effort -- and the Commodity Distribution Program had always been operated on this basis, I went to the Governors first, and then sent my people to talk with their State counterparts to enlist their support. We told them we would, if necessary, assist these counties to meet the administrative cost of the Commodity Distribution Program. Then, together, the USDA and State staffs went to local government boards, councils, and commissions to get their support and cooperation.

It was, and is, a hard, leather burning, often frustrating business; but it is the only way to make the Federal system do the job of serving people. And it doesn't always work perfectly. Of the 1,000 lowest income counties, after all the routes of State and local persuasion were exhausted, and over 180 counties had accepted the offer of help, I was left with no option but to operate a commodity program directly in 49 counties. Otherwise, the poor in these counties would not get the food assistance they clearly need.

We are now left with about 480 counties and independent cities where no food assistance program is available. Many of these are among our wealthiest counties, and most of them lie in the plains and mountain States of the Middle West. The question now is how do we get them into the program. I have been working for the past several months on a plan to bring a food assistance program into all the remaining areas. So long as one person is hungry and cannot afford the food he and his family needs, then all of us -- singly and together -- share a responsibility for his welfare.

In developing a plan to give complete coverage to the family food program, I have been reluctant to supplant local authority. I also have felt it is hardly appropriate to reward those who have denied assistance to the poor by offering to pay the administrative cost of operating the commodity program. If we do that for the more wealthy counties not in the program, the likely reaction of the other counties which have been willing to pay the cost of administration will be to demand similar treatment.

Considering all of these restraints, I have under consideration a plan to share local administrative costs with all counties -- or with States where these programs are operated by the State -- on an equitable basis. It calls for a sliding scale that will provide a range of payments -- 20 percent to over 90 percent -- depending on the number of persons in households with poverty incomes and the per capita income rank of the county. . . .

Last month I announced another large-scale revision in the purchase requirements and bonus levels for Food Stamps. Essentially, the action lowered the cost of stamps for families with incomes of \$70 or less a month, and increased the bonus amount to provide a greater level of food purchasing power than before. About 500,000 persons will benefit directly from these improvements which become effective in February and March.

The reduction in the purchase price reflects only part of a planned revision I had to cancel at the last moment after the Congress appropriated only \$280 million this fiscal year of a \$315 million authorization. I was prepared to carry out a broad revision of the food stamp purchase schedule in every income category. These revisions were based on a special task force survey which was begun by the Department almost 8 months ago. The task force, reviewing a number of previous studies -- including the just completed 1965 food consumption survey, concluded that low income families will spend less for food than we had assumed if their food expenditure pattern is considered over an extended time period. We are presently conducting additional studies to define these patterns more precisely. Our review, together with our program experience, indicated that month after month most of the poor would be able to allocate about 24 to 33 percent of their income for food, depending on family size.

We were prepared to reduce the purchase requirements had the Congress appropriated as much as it authorized.

In the future, the Food Stamp Program should be extended to all areas, replacing the Commodity Distribution Program. The cost of stamps should be reduced and the bonus levels should be increased to provide a food allowance fully adequate to meet the nutritional needs of those who are eligible. All it will take to do this are appropriations by the Congress.

In addition, a number of legislative modifications should be made to further strengthen program administration. These include the establishment of national eligibility standards based on income, and provision of authority for the Secretary to operate programs directly if local authority refuses or fails to meet decent standards of administration.

Before concluding my discussion of the Food Stamp Program, I wish to clarify one point which I believe has caused a great deal of misunderstanding. The legislative intent of the Congress in establishing this program was not to create a general relief program but -- as specifically and clearly stated in Section 7 of the Act -- a program to put food in peoples' bellies. So that money regularly spent on food would not be used for other purposes -- even such basic essentials as medicine or shoes -- the Congress specifically required that those who participate in the program must pay in what is determined they normally spend for food to receive bonus stamps. Until the Congress changes or modifies that requirement, any President or Secretary of Agriculture must by law require cash payment for bonus stamps. . . .

This fiscal year as a result of the efforts of Congressman Perkins, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, and a number of Senators, the Congress provided an additional \$45 million to increase our ability to reach more children with free and reduced price lunches and breakfasts.

This means we will be able to reach an additional 1.7 million school children with free or reduced price lunches for the remainder of this school year. Overall, more than 4 million children will receive free or reduced price lunches this year, compared to about 2.5 million last year.

While this effort goes far to close the gap, there are still more than 2.5 million children who should be receiving free or reduced price lunches, but who will not. Hopefully, next year, additional funding will make it possible to bring these children into the program.

While I have stressed thus far the importance of funding, I am also very much aware that success in the child nutrition programs also rests on a strong cooperative effort among Federal, State, and local government -- in this case the local school districts.

We have been concentrating on these problems, and I am reasonably confident that we are finding workable solutions to strengthen our joint operations. Last year, acting on the recommendations of a Federal-State school lunch workshop sponsored by the Department, I issued new regulations requiring each State to develop guidelines and each school district and child care institution to develop and publish policy statements for determining the eligibility of children for free and reduced price lunches, and to develop procedures to insure that children who receive this assistance are not singled out or subjected to ridicule.

Most States have now published these guidelines, and I anticipate that by early February most school districts also will have written criteria prepared and published.

These are only two of several steps which I believe will greatly strengthen the operation of the child nutrition programs. Last week Chairman Perkins introduced two bills, H.R. 515 and H.R. 516 which encompass many of the other actions I feel are needed. They include specific requirements for States to match Federal funds provided for lunch programs, authority for advance appropriations to allow more effective planning between the Department and the States and provision for a percentage of the funds appropriated for child nutrition programs to be used for nutrition education and for experimental projects in child feeding. I urge this committee to give most careful consideration to these proposals.

I also intend to publish shortly an amendment to the school lunch regulations which will enable school districts where large numbers of schools do not now provide lunch or meal service to experiment with the use of food management companies to provide food service. Currently, about 9.5 million children attend schools where meal service is not available. Most of these schools either are in the inner city, the ghetto communities, or in remote rural districts. They lack space for lunch room facilities, and generally serve a group of children who are most likely to benefit from the lunch program. More than a million will be eligible for free or reduced price lunches. . . .

I believe we are seeing the beginnings of a concerned citizenry, organized for the purpose of ending hunger in America, willing to support programs which supply the resources necessary to achieve this goal, and also willing to give of their own time and talent to see that food assistance reaches those who need it.

Thus, we have, or are about to have in place all the elements of a program to end hunger and malnutrition. We have more than enough food; we have a delivery system that, with minor modifications, will soon be able to reach every person in need; we have a national consensus that hunger and malnutrition must be eliminated; and we have a growing body of citizenry dedicated personally to the objective.

The question that remains is whether we will dedicate the resources -- money and manpower -- which this task requires.

The Congress will give the final answer to that question. I leave it in your hands. . . .

In addition to announcing changes in the food distribution program, Secretary Freeman announced, on January 2, 1969, the first grant for comprehensive multi-county planning assistance by a non-metropolitan district. The announcement of the \$20,213 grant for the development of the four-county Ozark-Gateway district in southwestern Missouri was made jointly by Secretary Freeman and the Acting Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Secretary Freeman said, "I am tempted to call the Housing and Urban Development Act under which this grant is being made as significant for the 20th century as the Homestead Act was for the 19th. . . . Properly funded and properly used, it will, I am confident, do for non-farm rural America what the Homestead Act did for Agriculture--open the door to new life, new opportunities in Countryside in U.S.A."

U. S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary

To End Hunger in America

Before we move into a discussion of where we are now and where we are headed, we need a clear distinction here as to what we are talking about. Ends, means and goals have become increasingly confused in the debate over hunger and malnutrition in recent months.

We have a quantity problem and we have a quality problem.

We solve the quantity problem by making food assistance available to every individual and every family in the country not getting enough food, and to every child in school or in group activities outside school.

We solve the quality problem by learning specifically who is malnourished, where they live, why they are malnourished and what they need to correct their undernutrition. The quality problem also requires better techniques to communicate the essentials of good nutrition, and to motivate people to take nutrition seriously.

An attack on the quantity problem and the quality problem must move forward hand-in-hand.

The Quantity Problem -- Where We Want to Go:

Family Food Assistance:

1. Operate a food stamp program in every county and independent city.
2. Reduce the amounts participants pay for food stamps. Revisions planned for this year if full funding had been provided would have required no family to spend more than a third of its income for stamps. Levels of bonus coupons should be raised to purchase a fully adequate diet. At present, we have closed only two-thirds of the gap.
3. Establish national minimum eligibility standards based on family size and income.

Remarks prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman before the conference on "To End Hunger in America" at 2:45 p.m. Wednesday, October 16, 1968, in the Grand Ballroom of the Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C.

4. Provide financial assistance to State and local governments for program administration where absolutely necessary.

5. Authorize the Secretary to administer the program directly where the local government is not prepared to do so.

6. Administrative changes already adopted include:

a. Reduction of the minimum purchase requirement to 50 cents a person per month with a maximum of \$2.00 for a family of six or more.

b. During the first year in any area, new participants pay one-half the normal purchase requirement the first month.

c. Revised certification procedures have been adopted to more effectively reach families with seasonal or intermittent income.

d. Emergency certification for a 30-day period has been authorized to enable families to receive food stamps before regular certification is completed.

e. States may now use mail issuance for coupons. The Bureau of Federal Credit Unions and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, at our request, have authorized credit unions and local savings and loan institutions to act as food stamp issuance offices under contract with the States.

The goals set forth in the first five points plus broader administrative changes will require legislation either to amend the Food Stamp Act or provide substantially higher appropriations.

A fully adequate program, reaching 10 million people would require at least \$2.1 billion and could be as much as \$3 billion.

Considering the difficulty we had in moving from \$225 to \$280 million for this year, solving this phase of the quantity problem should have top priority.

7. A supplementary package of foods enriched to meet the special nutrition needs of pregnant women, mothers and infants is being made available this year both in counties with the donated foods program and in food stamp areas. We expect to reach some 225,000 women and children this year. In 1970, we should reach 350,000 mothers, 150,000 infants and to 500,000 children aged one to six. When in full operation, this program will eventually cost \$140 million.

The Quantity Problem -- Where We Want to Go:

Child Nutrition:

1. A lunch program operating in every school in the country with every child able to participate regardless of ability to pay. A free or reduced price lunch should be offered to all of the 6.5 million children from needy families enrolled in school. At 15 cents per meal, the cost will be \$175 million.

2. A free or reduced price breakfast for children in inner-city schools and in consolidated rural schools. This fiscal year we expect to reach about 375,000 children. When in full operation, this program could serve as many as 2 million children at a cost of about \$54 million.

The Congress this year doubled the special assistance or section 11 funds from \$5 million to \$10 million. They held the breakfast program to last year's level of \$3.5 million and equipment funding to last year's level of \$750,000. Congress did provide an additional \$45 million

from Section 32 funds, primarily for child nutrition programs, and \$43 million will move to the States for use in low-income area schools. That \$43 million is viewed by the Congress as an emergency, one-year provision, but we will propose that this increase be incorporated in the 1970 budget.

3. We are extending food assistance programs for children to day-care centers, settlement and neighborhood houses and to summer recreational programs under the recently enacted Vanik bill. If, next year, the authorized amount of \$32 million is approved, we will be able to reach about 400,000 children, primarily those of pre-school age.

In total, then we will need more than \$1 billion to provide an adequate food service for children wherever they can be reached.

4. We have developed, with State cooperation, a set of national guidelines to determine which children should receive free or reduced price meals.

In view of the major legislative job ahead of us -- particularly in the light of the tremendous increase in appropriations that will be required to reach the goals outlined, it is essential that a sustained level of public support be achieved if we are to reach this objective.

I am suggesting two important advances here:

1. The establishment of a National Food Program Advisory Council for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to consult regularly with the Office of the Secretary and with program officials in policy planning and program development.

As part of this approach, an annual National Workshop will be held where State and local officials can participate with public groups in planning the operation of programs. This workshop would be followed by a series of regional conferences on the mechanics of implementing the food assistance programs. This will provide a communication system at all levels for the exchange of ideas which is essential to sound policy and program planning.

2. The establishment of a national organization of private agencies and organizations to develop and coordinate support for public and private programs to end hunger and malnutrition. This national organization should create sustained community support for these programs in each community, in the State legislatures and before the Congress. We need to have each community look to its own capabilities in this field, to what is being done in the State and then to focus this public support at the national level when the issues of legislation and funding are before the Congress.

The Quality Problem: Where We Are Now:

1. We don't know enough about the extent of hunger or malnutrition, or the components involved. DHEW is currently completing or undertaking studies -- medical evaluations -- in only eight States. It is already apparent that the situation varies from one geographic area to another -- even within a State. Until we know more about the extent and kinds of malnutrition we are dealing with it is difficult to devise more specific programs to meet the need.

The Quality Problem -- Where We Want to Go:

1. We need more extensive research into the nutritional status of our population. How much of it is a medical or health or sanitation problem as well as a food problem? Testimony by nutrition experts at the extensive hearings conducted by the House Committee on Education and Labor emphasized that the nutritional deficiency diseases of 30 years ago -- beriberi, scurvy and rickets had disappeared as public health problems. Today's problems are more subtle -- requiring clinical diagnosis and a specific determination of the nutritional short-fall. It is not easy to decide whether an individual or a family is suffering from poor nutrition alone or from that plus intestinal parasites that compound the nutritional problem. Are skin diseases the result of poor nutrition alone or poor sanitation compounded by poor nutrition?

2. Above all, we need nutrition education, particularly for low-income groups. If families don't know how to use donated foods or the food they buy with stamps -- if the youngsters fail to translate the meaning of the Type A lunch and breakfast programs into their own dietary habits and patterns, they will simply perpetuate poor nutrition into the next generation. This is particularly true where the very poor are concerned. Instead of improving the quality of their diets, they often prefer to eat more of the same poor diet. More of the same is just not good enough.

As part of the drive to reach low-income families with homemaker and nutrition help, we are putting 1,500 professional home economists and nutrition specialists to the job of training nutrition aides hired from low income neighborhoods to work with low-income families on getting the most for their food dollars. This year we plan to reach 200,000 families in the very lowest income categories, with a goal for 1970 of reaching 400,000 families.

3. In each of five Model Cities, Model Food Programs will be developed in cooperation with HUD. This project is now under way with a Federal team about to visit each of the five cities to explore with the local program Administrator and local groups the steps they feel should be taken to improve the food assistance programs in their Model Neighborhoods. The five cities are, Boston; Athens, Georgia; San Antonio, Texas; East St. Louis, Illinois, and Richmond, California. Judging by the information already provided by some of the Model Cities, there is great interest

in expanding the child nutrition programs and in providing out-reach -- including transportation -- to those who have difficulty reaching an office to be certified and to those who have difficulty in getting their commodities home where there is a donation program.

Meanwhile, we are gaining momentum in our Operation Metropolitan drive to get food service into inner-city elementary schools.

4. We are now launching a pilot outreach and consumer education program, "Food Makes a Difference." This is a cooperative effort involving several arms of this Department, representatives of the food marketing industry, voluntary groups and other private and public organizations. It is an information-action program designed to help low-income families particularly get more and better food through better use of existing resources, through expansion of food assistance to those who need it most and through greater understanding of how to shop wisely and eat well.

To sum up, what I hope we can accomplish here today is to develop a focus and an approach that will build to a national understanding and support for the food programs. We can debate until the end of time the adequacy of existing programs and the question as to why we don't do this or don't do that. I have stated our goals as we see them now, and I think you can appreciate why we need strong grassroots support for these programs. We must enlist the help of State and local governments and tap the energy and resources of national private organizations and agencies to bring continuing support for and participation in these programs.

Testimony of the Honorable Orville L. Freeman
Secretary of Agriculture
before the
Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Need
January 8, 1969

I approach this hearing with a sense of nostalgia and with some feeling of history. This is the last appearance I will make before a committee of the Congress as Secretary of Agriculture. I began my tenure with the personal commitment that we must do more as a nation to share the blessing of our abundance with those at home and abroad who are hungry and malnourished. Much remains to be done, but I believe a careful reading of the facts will bear out that we have written a creditable record on both fronts.

Thus, I feel it is most appropriate that just as my first act as Secretary was to carry out President Kennedy's first executive order to double the quantity and quality of food commodities distributed to the poor, so one of my last acts will be to review the changes in the food assistance programs which have been made and to recommend future courses of action to end hunger and eliminate malnutrition in this country.

I do not propose to spend much time discussing the need. The need, even though it is not precisely measurable, is as obvious as the capabilities we possess to meet it. There is no shortage of food. Quite the contrary. Clearly we are fighting now and will continue to fight the problem of over-production -- and not of shortage -- in agriculture. Failure to cope effectively with this challenge will have serious consequences for the nation's economy as well as the individual farmer.

Farm programs are not, as some people seem to think, competitors of food programs. In fact, one complements the other. Eliminating farm programs will not solve the food problem. Instead, it will complicate the problem further since the resulting drop in farm prices would fall heaviest on small farmers -- many of whom now earn only a poverty income -- whose income would be cut by more than a third.

I urge this committee to distinguish clearly between commodity programs and food programs. They are different programs, developed to serve different purposes.

Let me repeat the key point: This nation has enough -- more than enough -- food. We can easily produce a great deal more. The single question that remains is whether we have the skill, ingenuity and determination to get the food to where it is needed.

That is, can we provide a delivery system which will work?

This is the real question which has engaged my attention as Secretary. I feel we have built a Federal system which, if two components are strengthened, will do the job. But, and I underscore this point, I am talking about a very big "IF" -- If the programs are funded sufficiently; and If the State and local governments give as much support to this goal as does the Department of Agriculture.

There is little I can do about the money other than to plead with the Congress; in regard to what steps can be taken at State and local levels, I will have more to say later.

To set the stage for these and other recommendations, let me review briefly what has been done in the two broad programs of food assistance -- family food, and the child nutrition programs.

We began, as I indicated, in 1961 with a family food program which provided 5 commodities monthly worth \$2.20 to about 3.7 million people. It was operated by local governments in some 1,271 counties and cities.

The nutritional value of the program, as we found it, was low, because the 5 commodities -- flour, lard, rice, dry milk and corn meal -- fell far short of nutritional minimums. This has changed. The program has been greatly expanded, first by order of President Kennedy, and most recently under President Johnson. At present, we offer 22 commodities worth \$12.70 per person monthly. It is being operated in 1,419 counties, cities and administrative units -- although all of them do not handle the full 22 commodities. Where they do, the individual family has available, in nearly all respects, the components for a fully adequate, balanced diet.

At the same time the commodity program was being enlarged, we also launched the Food Stamp Program as an experimental effort to determine whether a more effective food delivery system could be developed. We began with 8 pilot projects in July 1961, under regulations which I issued. By 1964, when President Johnson proposed to make the Food Stamp Program the first line food delivery system in the war on poverty, the number of projects had increased to 43. After Congress authorized the permanent Food Stamp

Program, it grew to 324 projects in 1966, 838 in 1967, and to 1,553 projects in operation or under development today.

Today, one or the other family food assistance program is in operation or soon will be in 2,646 counties where over 83 percent of the American people live. Nearly 6.3 million persons are participating, and we anticipate that this number will increase to over 7 million by the end of this fiscal year.

Reaching the point where a food delivery system is available in all but 480 counties and independent cities has not been easy. For more than 6 of the past 8 years the effort has been fairly lonely. In the last two years, we have been joined by more and more supporters, and progress has been accelerating.

About a year and a half ago I began a project designed to insure that a food assistance program would be available in each of the counties which rank among the 1,000 with the lowest per capita income. At that time, over 330 of these counties did not have a food assistance program.

Recognizing that Congress had authorized the Food Stamp Program as a joint Federal-State effort -- and the Commodity Distribution Program had always been operated on this basis, I went to the Governors first, and then sent my people to talk with their State counterparts to enlist their support. We told them we would, if necessary, assist these counties to meet the administrative cost of the Commodity Distribution Program. Then, together, the USDA and State staffs went to local government boards, councils, and commissions to get their support and cooperation.

It was, and is, a hard, leather burning, often frustrating business; but it is the only way to make the Federal system do the job of serving people. And it doesn't always work perfectly. Of the 1,000 lowest income counties, after all the routes of State and local persuasion were exhausted, and over 180 counties had accepted the offer of help, I was left with no option but to operate a commodity program directly in 49 counties. Otherwise, the poor in these counties would not get the food assistance they clearly need.

We are now left with about 480 counties and independent cities where no food assistance program is available. Many of these are among our wealthiest counties, and most of them lie in the plains and mountain States of the Middle West. The question now is how do we get them into the program. I have been working for the past several months on a plan to bring a food assistance program into all the remaining areas. So long as one person is hungry and cannot afford the food he and his family needs, then all of us -- singly and together -- share a responsibility for his welfare.

In developing a plan to give complete coverage to the family food program, I have been reluctant to supplant local authority. I also have felt it is hardly appropriate to reward those who have denied assistance to the poor by offering to pay the administrative cost of operating the commodity program. If we do that for the more wealthy counties not in the program, the likely reaction of the other counties which have been willing to pay the cost of administration will be to demand similar treatment.

Considering all of these restraints, I have under consideration a plan to share local administrative costs with all counties -- or with States where these programs are operated by the State -- on an equitable basis. It calls for a sliding scale that will provide a range of payments -- 20 percent to over 90 percent -- depending on the number of persons in households with poverty incomes and the per capita income rank of the county.

To be eligible for this assistance, each county will have to submit a proposed plan of operation, detailing such facts as the number of commodities to be distributed, the number of distribution centers to be established, special distribution plans -- such as truck delivery for the elderly and disabled, and special procedures for certifying eligible families and individuals.

Such a cost-sharing plan would, we think, help to reach the localities not yet in the program and provide uniform guidelines to strengthen the program all over the country.

We have been equally vigorous in efforts to improve the Food Stamp Program. We have in the past two years (1) reduced the price of stamps for the very poor from \$2 a month per person to 50 cents, with a family maximum of \$3, (2) reduced the cost the first month for a new family by half, and (3) instituted over 20 other administrative reforms -- ranging from a new certification procedure for families with seasonal income to allowing States to deliver stamps by mail without being held liable for loss.

Last month I announced another large-scale revision in the purchase requirements and bonus levels for Food Stamps. Essentially, the action lowered the cost of stamps for families with incomes of \$70 or less a month, and increased the bonus amount to provide a greater level of food purchasing power than before. About 500,000 persons will benefit directly from these improvements which become effective in February and March.

The reduction in the purchase price reflects only part of a planned revision I had to cancel at the last moment after the Congress appropriated only \$280 million this fiscal year of a \$315 million authorization. I was prepared to carry out a broad revision of the food stamp purchase schedule in every income category. These revisions were based on a special task force survey which was begun by the Department almost 8 months ago. The task force, reviewing a number of previous studies -- including the just completed 1965 food consumption survey, concluded that low income families will spend less for food than we had assumed if their food expenditure pattern is considered over an extended time period. We are presently conducting additional studies to define these patterns more precisely. Our review, together with our program experience, indicated that month after month most of the poor would be able to allocate about 24 to 33 percent of their income for food, depending on family size.

We were prepared to reduce the purchase requirements had the Congress appropriated as much as it authorized.

In the future, the Food Stamp Program should be extended to all areas, replacing the Commodity Distribution Program. The cost of stamps should be reduced and the bonus levels should be increased to provide a food allowance fully adequate to meet the nutritional needs of those who are eligible. All it will take to do this are appropriations by the Congress.

In addition, a number of legislative modifications should be made to further strengthen program administration. These include the establishment of national eligibility standards based on income, and provision of authority for the Secretary to operate programs directly if local authority refuses or fails to meet decent standards of administration.

Before concluding my discussion of the Food Stamp Program, I wish to clarify one point which I believe has caused a great deal of misunderstanding. The legislative intent of the Congress in establishing this program was not to create a general relief program but -- as specifically and clearly stated in Section 7 of the Act -- a program to put food in peoples' bellies. So that money regularly spent on food would not be used for other purposes -- even such basic essentials as medicine or shoes -- the Congress specifically required that those who participate in the program must pay in what is determined they normally spend for food to receive bonus stamps. Until the Congress changes or modifies that requirement, any President or Secretary of Agriculture must by law require cash payment for bonus stamps.

The second major food assistance effort conducted by the USDA is the Child Nutrition Program, which include a range of programs we have developed over the past 8 years to improve the diets of America's children, particularly those from families with poverty incomes, when they are away from home during the day.

When I became Secretary in 1961, the school lunch and special milk programs were the only tools we had to serve the needs of children in group activities away from home. Today this has been broadened to include a school breakfast program, extension of the child feeding program to non-school day care activities, authority and appropriations for sharply increased funds to boost the number of free or reduced price lunches, to assist schools to acquire lunch facilities and to provide States with funds to meet the additional administrative costs of these new programs.

Some of this authority has been on the books since 1962, and most of it since 1966; but until the current year, Congress has provided only token funding.

This fiscal year as a result of the efforts of Congressman Perkins, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, and a number of Senators, the Congress provided an additional \$45 million to increase our ability to reach more children with free and reduced price lunches and breakfasts.

This means we will be able to reach an additional 1.7 million school children with free or reduced price lunches for the remainder of this school year. Overall, more than 4 million children will receive free

or reduced price lunches this year, compared to about 2.5 million last year.

While this effort goes far to close the gap, there are still more than 2.5 million children who should be receiving free or reduced price lunches, but who will not. Hopefully, next year, additional funding will make it possible to bring these children into the program.

While I have stressed thus far the importance of funding, I am also very much aware that success in the child nutrition programs also rests on a strong cooperative effort among Federal, State, and local government -- in this case the local school districts.

We have been concentrating on these problems, and I am reasonably confident that we are finding workable solutions to strengthen our joint operations. Last year, acting on the recommendations of a Federal-State school lunch workshop sponsored by the Department, I issued new regulations requiring each State to develop guidelines and each school district and child care institution to develop and publish policy statements for determining the eligibility of children for free and reduced price lunches, and to develop procedures to insure that children who receive this assistance are not singled out or subjected to ridicule.

Most States have now published these guidelines, and I anticipate that by early February most school districts also will have written criteria prepared and published.

These are only two of several steps which I believe will greatly strengthen the operation of the child nutrition programs. Last week

Chairman Perkins introduced two bills, H.R. 515 and H.R. 516 which encompass many of the other actions I feel are needed. They include specific requirements for States to match Federal funds provided for lunch programs, authority for advance appropriations to allow more effective planning between the Department and the States and provision for a percentage of the funds appropriated for child nutrition programs to be used for nutrition education and for experimental projects in child feeding. I urge this committee to give most careful consideration to these proposals.

I also intend to publish shortly an amendment to the school lunch regulations which will enable school districts where large numbers of schools do not now provide lunch or meal service to experiment with the use of food management companies to provide food service. Currently, about 9.5 million children attend schools where meal service is not available. Most of these schools either are in the inner city, the ghetto communities, or in remote rural districts. They lack space for lunch room facilities, and generally serve a group of children who are most likely to benefit from the lunch program. More than a million will be eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

The problems of reaching the inner city schools have received a great deal of attention within the Department in recent years. Two years ago we launched "Operation Metropolitan", a program designed to focus additional manpower and technical resources on the inner city school systems. It has produced some notable successes, but it is a long-range answer to an immediate and pressing need.

Thus, last summer, when it became clear that more funds would be available for child nutrition programs, I directed that an approach be developed to see if we could "leap-frog" the time consuming and expensive procedure of equipping these schools with extensive kitchen and food service equipment.

During the fall and winter, working first with the States and then with representatives of food management companies, we developed a series of prototype contracts which school districts could use to employ the food service capabilities of the commercial food management firms.

I want the management and administrative responsibilities for the school lunch program to remain with the professional school lunch supervisor, but I also want to see if the job of preparing, transporting and serving the meal can be contracted out. If the availability of meals -- the key roadblock to food service in these hard-to-reach schools -- could be overcome with the help of commercial firms, then we would achieve our goal in a short period of time.

At the present time we plan to line up about half a dozen school districts in urban areas to participate in this experimental program. There is considerable criticism among the school food service profession toward using commercial food service firms. However, I feel confident, that as they study the contracts, and the safeguards which have been built into them, they will recognize the service company

approach as simply another tool to help assure every child an opportunity for a nutritious meal in school. We have taken every step, as the law requires, to preserve the non-profit character of the school lunch program.

Considering the gap which remains between the good intentions we express and our ability to carry them out, I do not believe any approach should be excluded arbitrarily. In cooperation with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, we are launching comprehensive community food programs in 5 model city projects, with special emphasis on child nutrition programs. We are encouraging more school districts to experiment with pre-packaged meals which can be served quickly with minimum investment in kitchen equipment. I also would like to see experiments tried with publicly owned inter-district food service units where one central facility would handle food purchasing and preparation and delivery services for all schools and child care activities in several districts. I believe real economies in the purchasing, preparation and delivery of meals could be achieved, even as school food service is improved.

While we are devoting a great deal of time and effort to developing improved techniques of food service, we also have been working at the even more difficult task of achieving effective program coordination with State and local government. Both are essential to effective delivery systems.

The national workshop on child nutrition programs which I referred to earlier is just one example of how we are attempting to develop action programs which have the active support of State and local officials. We plan to hold more.

Early last year I also requested the USDA-Land Grant College Joint Committee to develop a research and training program for school food service personnel at Federal, State, and local levels. I now have their report and I am taking steps to carry it out.

Briefly, the committee recommends regional seminars to provide continuing education for State and local food service professionals; regional centers for graduate training to increase professional competence in nutrition, education, and the several aspects of program administration; more research in food service programs; development of an associate degree program in Junior and Community colleges; and establishment of an Educational Materials Center in the USDA for instructional materials in training food service personnel.

This program will provide the foundation for continual improvement in the professional capability of those working in the child nutrition programs.

We estimate that such a program to generate improved child nutrition services will cost no less than one million dollars annually. The Perkins bills will provide sufficient legislative and funding authority.

I am confident that the delivery systems for both the Family Food and the Child Nutrition programs can be perfected to the point where they will provide the opportunity for an adequate, balanced diet for all those who are served by them. We are moving steadily and effectively to achieve that goal.

I would be less than candid, however, if I were to leave the impression that making food available to all under these programs will eliminate hunger and end malnutrition. It will not.

Many low income individuals with special needs for food assistance cannot get it through a family program or one where only children in group activities are served. Pregnant women, mothers and infants and pre-school age children often are not reached effectively with either of the general purpose programs. Yet they constitute a population group with special nutrition problems, particularly those related to iron deficiency -- anemia -- and the lack of protein.

Recognizing this, we have developed a program to provide special food supplements with emphasis on protein and iron enriched foods. Since we are also dealing with conditions which require individual diagnosis of physical conditions by competent medical personnel, we are setting up this program with the cooperation of health officials in HEW and OEO to be run through health clinics, hospitals and medical centers which serve the poor. We provide the food, and the clinic staffs determine who receives what commodities based on the health needs of the woman or child.

This program is now in operation in 60 areas, and we plan to make it available Nationwide as rapidly as we can. Its effectiveness, however, will depend on the general availability of health services.

Another group within our population with special nutritional needs is the aged, particularly those living alone. While the Commodity Distribution or the Food Stamp program can assist many of these older Americans, the problem is more complex than the availability of food alone. Living alone, they often fail to eat properly -- they show little interest in preparing or eating a well balanced diet.

It has been difficult to develop a general program approach to assist this group, primarily because the central problem is not the lack of food. For those who are invalids or shut-ins, many communities have developed a meal-on-wheels program; in other communities, the local schools have opened the school lunch facilities to the aged during the hours the children are not being fed. Perhaps this latter approach will be the best, for it not only affords an opportunity for good nutrition, but also puts the older person in an environment where he can be with children -- and possibly help with their education.

The unique nutrition problems of these special population groups, and the specialized techniques required to cope with them, serves also to illustrate a key function we have failed to give adequate recognition and attention in the effort to end hunger and malnutrition.

The most successful delivery systems will be useless without an intensive program of nutrition education. We are dealing with the lack of adequate knowledge of and incentive for nutrition as well as the lack of enough to eat.

Providing the food may well be the easiest phase of the goal of ending hunger and malnutrition; getting people to prepare the food, and to want to eat a balanced diet, may be the toughest part of the job. For one thing, we are dealing with nutrition habits borne of generations of making do with inadequate food; for another, the methods of mass communication and the techniques of group education we are most familiar with do not always reach the poor.

For this reason I have directed the Federal Extension Service to begin a program of nutrition education which will reach the lowest income individuals and individual families in their homes. It is a departure for Extension Service, in that much of this program will be carried out in urban areas, and it will be done largely with non-professionals working on a person-to-person, face-to-face basis.

It will not be entirely new for the Extension Service in that the technique has been developed in a number of experimental projects over the past few years. But what is new is that this educational approach will become a primary Extension Service assignment in every State rather than an experimental project in a few.

All but 5 States already have submitted proposed plans to carry out nutrition education among the poor, and we are approving and funding them as rapidly as possible. While each State program may differ in detail, all of them will involve the same basic approach. To the maximum extent possible, poor people will be hired, trained and supervised by Extension Service nutritionists and home economists to work in their neighborhood with their neighbors. They will teach them how and what foods to buy, and how to prepare the foods to get the maximum nutritive benefits.

I have set aside \$10 million from Section 32 funds this fiscal year for this program, and our plan is to hire about 4,000 nutrition aides to teach about 140,000 of the lowest income families. I would propose the continual expansion of this program in parallel with the expansion of the Family Food Assistance programs.

This program of nutrition education can become the core of a comprehensive community nutrition program in every city and county in the U.S. Ultimately, the abolition of malnutrition will occur only when each community becomes dedicated to this objective. Try as we may, the Federal government can only provide resources and leadership for those in the community who will then do the work.

Over the past few years, particularly in the last 12 months, I have been greatly impressed by the response of many groups and individuals to the challenge of ending hunger and malnutrition. We have reports of countless community projects to help locate those who need food assistance, to provide transportation to and from distribution centers and to assist families in the preparation of well balanced meals.

On the national level, we have set up a food program advisory committee with a membership of representatives from civic, social action, religious, and poverty groups. Only last week, the National board of the Young Women's Christian Association met with our food program staff to develop a program this group could carry out through their local organizations. This week, a coalition of educational, civic, labor and religious organizations is being formed with the leadership of the National Educational Association to coordinate support for Child Nutrition programs at all levels of government.

I believe we are seeing the beginnings of a concerned citizenry, organized for the purpose of ending hunger in America, willing to support programs which supply the resources necessary to achieve this goal, and also willing to give of their own time and talent to see that food assistance reaches those who need it.

Thus, we have, or are about to have in place all the elements of a program to end hunger and malnutrition. We have more than enough food; we have a delivery system that, with minor modifications, will soon be able to reach every person in need; we have a national consensus that hunger and malnutrition must be eliminated; and we have a growing body of citizenry dedicated personally to the objective.

The question that remains is whether we will dedicate the resources -- money and manpower -- which this task requires.

The Congress will give the final answer to that question. I leave it in your hands.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Niles DU 8-5015
McDavid DU 8-4026

Washington, Nov. 18, 1968

USDA Designates 235 More Areas for Food Stamp Program:

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman today designated another 235 areas in 31 States to begin the Food Stamp Program this fiscal year.

An estimated 280,000 low-income people will be able to increase their food-buying power with food stamps for the first time in the new areas. Newly designated counties include 94 that have no U.S. Department of Agriculture family food-help program, and a number of others with only partial food distribution programs.

Counties including such major cities as Houston, Texas, Sacramento, Calif., Des Moines, Iowa, and Newark, N.J. are among the new areas, as are a great number of rural counties.

When the areas announced today are in operation, together with another 135 previously-designated areas that are currently in the process of starting programs, well over 3 million people will be benefiting from food stamps in some 1,550 areas in 43 States and the District of Columbia. At the same time, another 3.5 million needy people will be getting USDA donated foods in counties and communities taking part in the Commodity Distribution Program.

Secretary Freeman said that today's designations include all areas requested by State welfare agencies when they were recently canvassed by USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service. He added that actual Federal expenditures will continue to be watched in the months ahead so that further designations can be considered as new requests are made.

(more)

The Food Stamp Program enables eligible low-income families to increase their food-purchasing power by investing their own food money in Federal food coupons ("food stamps") worth more than they paid. The coupons are spent like cash at retail food outlets authorized under the program.

Exact dates when the areas designated today will begin issuing food stamps to low-income families will be announced locally, after C&MS personnel and State welfare officials have planned a timetable for the steps that need to be taken to assure effective and efficient programs.

These procedures include training of welfare case workers in the community on Food Stamp Program objectives and procedures, providing for coupon issuance either through commercial banks or from an issuing office set up and staffed by State or county employees, certifying needy families as eligible for the program, and meeting with retail grocers and food wholesalers to assure their understanding of the food industry role before being authorized to accept and redeem the Federal food coupons.

Newly designated areas, by States, are as follows:

(more)

USDA 3628-68

Food Stamp Designations November 18, 1968

(All are counties unless otherwise indicated.)

ALABAMA

Tuscaloosa

ARKANSAS

Howard

Nevada

Scott

White

CALIFORNIA

Del Norte

Marin

Monterey

Sacramento

Stanislaus

Tehama

COLORADO

Baca

Douglas

Eagle

Moffat

Ouray

Park

Rio Blanco

San Juan

San Miguel

GEORGIA

Dooly

Newton

Sumter

Wilcox

INDIANA

Blackford

Brown

Dearborn

Delaware

Grant

Huntington

St. Joseph

Sullivan

Warren

IOWA

Adair

Black Hawk

Boone

Bremer

Fremont

Louisa

IOWA (con't)

Mills

Monroe

Muscatine

Page

Polk

Poweshiek

Webster

Worth

KANSAS

Franklin

Johnson

Leavenworth

Neosho

KENTUCKY

Boone

Bracken

Christian

Edmonson

Fayette

Fulton

Hart

Larue

Lewis

Marion

McLean

Metcalfe

Monroe

Owen

LOUISIANA (Parishes)

Bienville

East Feliciana

Jackson

Jefferson

Lafourche

Lincoln

Sabine

St. Bernard

Tangipahoa

Webster

West Baton Rouge

MAINE

Sagadahoc

MARYLAND

Cecil

(more)

MASSACHUSETTS

City of Amherst

MICHIGAN

Baraga

Calhoun

Cass

Ionia

Livingston

Marquette

Mecosta

Menominee

Montcalm

Presque Isle

Tuscola

MINNESOTA

Brown

Grant

Meeker

Norman

Steele

Stevens

Waseca

MISSISSIPPI

Adams

Calhoun

Clarke

Lafayette

Neshoba

Newton

Pearl River

Rankin

Sharkey

Smith

Tippah

MONTANA

Hill

Mineral

Missoula

Musselshell

Richland

USDA 3628-68

NEBRASKA

Adams
Blaine
Box Butte
Chase
Deuel-Garden
Dundy
Frontier
Furnas
Hayes
Hitchcock
Hooker
Lincoln
Logan
Madison
McPherson
Otoe
Richardson
Thomas
Washington
Wayne
Webster

NEW JERSEY

Essex
Hunterdon
Monmouth
Morris
Somerset

NEW MEXICO

Los Alamos

NEW YORK

Dutchess
Greene
Orange
City of Poughkeepsie
Ulster
Westchester

NORTH CAROLINA

Catawba
Davie
Iredell
Lincoln
McDowell
Pitt
Polk
Richmond
Robeson

NORTH DAKOTA

Adams
Divide
Griggs
Nelson
Pembina
Renville
Stutsman

OHIO

Auglaize
Fairfield
Fayette
Jackson
Madison
Mercer
Pike
Pickaway
Seneca
Warren
Williams

PENNSYLVANIA

Bedford
Bucks
Carbon
Chester
Cumberland
Forest
Franklin
Lancaster
Lebanon
Lehigh
Montgomery
Pike
Schuylkill
Warren

RHODE ISLAND

City of Cranston
City of North Providence
City of West Warwick
Washington

SOUTH DAKOTA

Aurora
Charles Mix
Clark
Day
Douglas
Edmunds
Gregory

SOUTH DAKOTA (con't)

Haakon
Hanson
Hughes
Hyde
Jackson
Lake
Lincoln
McCook
McPherson
Miner
Minnehaha
Perkins
Roberts
Spink
Turner
Walworth

TENNESSEE

Bradley
Carter
Hamblen
Henderson
Maury
Rhea
White

TEXAS

Harris

VIRGINIA

City of Hampton
City of Lynchburg
City of Martinsville
Nottoway
City of Portsmouth
City of Richmond
Roanoke
(incl. City of Salem)
City of Virginia Beach

WISCONSIN

Buffalo
Iowa
LaCrosse
Marquette

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

STAMPS THAT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

I welcome this opportunity to talk to this distinguished Forum of leaders in the food world. I want to tell you about this coupon -- usually known as a "food stamp". It has a significant place in the food industry.

I want to explore with you its progress and potential -- the opportunities these coupons offer to low-income shoppers, the food business, merchandisers and communicators.

Let's start with the coupon itself. Have you ever seen a food stamp? A real one that's good for food at the store. Chances are the answer is no, unless you happen to have found yourself in a checkout line immediately behind a food stamp shopper and seen her pull out a special book of coupons to pay for food.

These coupons are money -- special money that can only be spent for food. They're printed in \$2 and 50 cent denominations at the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Every last one must be accounted for. They're usually transported in armored cars, stored in bank vaults and dispensed under tight security. Counterfeiters have made attempts to copy these coupons, without success I'm glad to say.

But the real value of this food stamp coupon is in the extra food it buys for a low-income person. Food stamp coupons increase the amount of money a family has to spend for food. These coupons assure that the family gets more food.

Address by Howard P. Davis, Deputy Administrator, Consumer Food Programs, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, at GMA Forum, at Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, New York, November 14, 1968, 10:30 a.m., EST.

To show how this works I'm going to use an example of a real family but using a fake name. This particular family -- like many of our Food Stamp customers -- are proud of their participation in this program. It is a successful experience for them, indicating they are smart, saving consumers, investing and planning for their own future.

Mr. Warren Smith and his wife, Elenora, of Baltimore are both unable to work because of disabling heart disease. Public welfare assistance of \$193 a month is helping them and their two school-age daughters get along. But after they meet their payments for rent and utilities, there's not much left for food. Mr. Smith says that without food stamps he doesn't know what would have happened to his family.

About a year ago -- when the Food Stamp Program first opened in Baltimore -- Mr. Smith went down to the welfare office to apply for Food Stamps. He was considered automatically eligible because he had already been certified for public assistance.

He learned that by putting up \$64 a month, about the amount he normally spent for food, he could get back \$90 worth of food stamp coupons. These amounts are figured according to family size and net monthly income.

Then Mr. Smith got an identification card, authorizing him to buy \$90 worth of food stamps at the issuance office. Once a month is food stamp day for Warren Smith and several neighboring food stamp customers since they get their welfare checks once a month. He borrows a car and they all go down to the issuance office to buy their stamps. Then they're off to market with their shopping lists, having checked out the best buys and special sales.

They prefer to buy large quantities at one time, but they don't have to. Food stamps can be spent any time the shopper wants to use them.

(more)

The Smiths can spend their coupons in virtually any store in the Baltimore area. Most retail stores in food stamp areas find it to their advantage to become authorized for food stamp business. And why not? On an average it means an eight percent increase in total retail food sales in food stamp communities. The merchant redeems the food stamp coupons for cash through his regular bank or his wholesaler.

When a food stamp customer like Mr. Smith gets to the check-out, he uses his food stamps just like money to pay for his food. If there is change coming, he gets an IOU from the grocer that's good for food on the next shopping trip. Now, supposing he bought some nonfood items like paper towels or soap, a mop or broom. He has to use cash for these. The amount he pays for his food stamps is based on what he would normally spend for food alone and the stamps he gets are to solely and simply help his family get a better diet.

Also, food stamps can't be used for foods that are marked imported. But coffee, tea, bananas and cocoa are exceptions, since they don't compete with American farm products.

One of the aims of the food stamp program is to expand markets for American food production at the same time it helps Warren Smith and about 2.6 million other Americans get more and better food. Food Stamp customers like Mr. Smith are some of the best good will ambassadors we have. They tell their neighbors about food stamps and help them apply for the program.

They also help answer a lot of the questions and misconceptions that people have about the program. The first thing a new food stamp customer may ask is...

"Why do I have to pay for the stamps?"

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Stamp customers are not just paying out money for stamps. They actually swap their own food money for this special kind of food money that's worth more than they paid. The increase in buying power means not only more food but also better food. Many regular food stamp users tell us it's an advantage to invest their food money in stamps. They may purchase monthly or semi-monthly and in a number of places, weekly. One lady said, "Then I know I've got my food money and it can't be spent for anything else but food, and that's so important, especially for the children."

Some people think food stamps "cost" too much.

The amount of money recipients must pay is based on net monthly income and family size. Certifying officers take into account such hardship expenses as high medical bills, high rent, and costs of child care. The aim is to arrive at a purchase price that represents what the family would normally have to spend for food. Many families are pleasantly surprised to find that when they add up all the small amounts they spend for food during the month, the total is more than they pay for the stamps.

Others run into difficulty when they fail to report the full details of their income and expenses to the welfare office. By forgetting to bring in a medical bill, or information about babysitting costs, a food stamp customer may be asked to pay more for the stamps than is necessary or than he can afford.

And by neglecting to report a reduction in income, a food stamp family may find they don't have enough money to buy the stamps.

We had a case like this in Washington, D.C., this year. A local community action group complained to the D.C. Food Stamp Office that a lady on Social Security had only \$4 left after she paid her rent, and was supposed to pay \$6 for her stamps. It turned out the lady had originally been certified to pay

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the \$6 some months earlier when she was getting extra money from her son. The extra income had stopped, but she had not reported the change to the Food Stamp Office. For her, this meant a serious loss of food buying power. When the matter was cleared up, they reduced her purchase price to the minimum level of 50 cents, for which she got \$12 in stamps.

This illustrates just a few of the complexities involved in working with the food problems of the poor. Too often we mistakenly think of needy people as having a regular income like everybody else, but just a lot less. That's far from true. Many low-income people have very sporadic incomes. They may have been paid for work last week, but there's no work this week and the money is gone. Maybe next week there'll be a few days' pay, maybe not.

We are continually studying how low-income people spend their money, in an effort to help the greatest number of needy families within the limits of Food Stamp Program funds and authorities.

As a result of these efforts, in 1967 the purchase requirement for the poorest of the poor was reduced from \$2 a month per person to 50 cents, with a maximum of \$3 per family, regardless of size. We began offering new food stamp families their first month's food stamps at half price to give them a chance to catch up on back grocery bills and get cash ahead for the next month.

These new measures were far more successful than we anticipated. Participation increased so rapidly that by last April it became clear that we were heading for a possible deficit for the fiscal year ending in June. We had to put off plans to expand the Food Stamp Program to many new areas. We delayed openings and used emergency and standby authority to get through the budget squeeze.

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We went back to Congress with a request for more money than they had previously authorized for the Food Stamp Program in this fiscal year, to expand and improve the program still further. Congress appropriated a total of \$280 million for this year, \$55 million more than had been authorized earlier. This means we can go right ahead with plans to expand the Food Stamp Program to some 135 areas that had been delayed since last spring and summer. And we hope for still further expansion by the end of this fiscal year. Within these funds we may be able to make some beginning on needed adjustments in purchase requirements and bonus coupons for the very low income groups.

Currently, the Food Stamp Program is operating in over 1,180 of the Nation's counties and independent cities, with some 2.6 million people taking part. In total, they are increasing their food buying power by about \$18 million a month. The average investment per person is slightly over \$11 a month for which they receive food stamps worth about \$18.

To complete the picture, let me mention that the other USDA program of family food help -- the Commodity Distribution Program -- is still very significant, operating in some 1,300 U.S. counties and cities for the benefit of 3.5 million needy people. We hope that funds will eventually be provided to replace all the food donation programs with food stamps, but meanwhile we have made some improvements in the donated foods activity, too.

In recent months the number of foods available for donation has been increased to 22, offering much greater variety and a diet that's far superior to anything yet offered in a national food assistance program. Special supplemental foods are also available under a new program, just opened, for medical authorities to "prescribe" for mothers and infants who must have more food to meet their health and nutrition needs.

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The administration of family food assistance has changed from a passive offering to State and local governments to active encouragement and the promise that Federal authority will intervene if necessary to make food available to families, particularly in the lowest income areas of the Nation.

Of the Nation's 3,126 counties and independent cities, some 500 are still without any plans to operate either a food stamp or food donation program for their low-income residents. We intend to use every means possible to encourage these areas to decide to operate either one of the family food assistance programs. Both operate on the basic premise that the details of food program administration rest on a cooperative Federal-State-local structure.

At the same time, we are expanding our efforts to reach children of low-income families who need more and better food through organized feeding programs both in and out of school. In the past decade the concept of child feeding programs has been enlarged from the narrow view of providing school lunches to include school breakfasts and feeding programs for child-care activities outside the school system. This year we have more Federal assistance than ever before to help States and local communities provide food services for all children -- especially the needy -- in group activities in and out of school.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has long recognized that adequate food and proper diets for all citizens are essential to the continued health and welfare of this Nation.

For some 105 years, a part of USDA's mission has been to carry out basic research in agriculture and nutrition, and to release the results of this research to the people of this country. Our efforts in large measure have enabled American farmers to become the greatest agricultural producers in history.

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At the same time, we have devoted -- and continue to devote -- considerable time and energy to the marketing of this massive production. Improving quality, as well as increasing quantity, has been a primary goal. Thus, we have helped to foster a distribution system that is more efficient, more economical, and more responsive to consumers in general than any other in the world today.

Unfortunately, the poor without assistance do not and cannot participate fully in the benefits of this system.

Until every person is able to earn enough to maintain a reasonable, minimum standard of living -- including an adequate diet -- food assistance programs must operate to wipe out hunger and malnutrition.

In this country the broad, general problem is, technically, under-nutrition in varying degrees. Prolonged and serious denial of essential nutrients, of course, creates malnutrition. And evidence indicates that there is considerable malnutrition in this country.

Malnutrition in the United States has its roots in economics, ignorance, and food habits. Millions of people -- elderly, disabled, unemployed or unemployable -- simply do not have enough money to buy the quantity and quality of foods necessary for full nourishment. Many of these people also lack understanding of good nutrition.

But a lot of other people don't eat all of the proper foods, either. A survey of food consumption by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1965 indicated that only half of a nationwide sample of U.S. families consumed a "good" diet -- that is, the nutritive content of the food used in the home equaled or exceeded the recommended amounts for each of seven basic nutrients for all members of the household.

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About 20 percent of the households surveyed were found to have a "poor" diet -- which is defined as being at a level which "could be nutritionally inadequate for some individuals over an extended period of time."

Predictably, the poor diets were more prevalent in -- but not limited to -- families with incomes under \$3,000, a figure frequently used as a rough "poverty line" in the United States. Some 36 percent of such households had poor diets, with the percentages declining successively as income levels increased. Yet even among families with incomes of \$10,000 and over, fully 9 percent had poor diets.

Through the development of these food assistance programs in this decade, we have today the weapons to win the war on malnutrition in this country. And we have a consensus and a commitment to move forward and get the job done.

When we talk about a national commitment, it has to be truly national however. The challenge is here for public agencies at the National level, at the State level, and especially at the local level. And the challenge is here for the private sector too -- for business and industry, for educators and nutritionists, for clubs and organizations, and for individual citizens.

We are broadening our educational and outreach efforts in a number of ways not only to help needy people use the Federal assistance to improve their diets and their living...but also to make better nutrition a national objective for everyone.

Above all, we need nutrition education, particularly for low income and under-privileged consumers. If families don't know how to use the food they buy with stamps -- they will simply perpetuate poor nutrition into the next generation. This is particularly true where the poor are concerned. Instead of improving the quality of their diets they often prefer to eat more of the same poor diet. More of the same is just not good enough.

As part of a drive to reach low-income families with homemaker and nutrition help, we are putting 1,500 professional home economists and nutrition specialists to the job of training nutrition aides hired from low income neighborhoods to work with low-income families on getting the most for their food dollars. This year we plan to reach 200,000 families in the very lowest income categories, with a goal for 1970 of reaching 400,000 families.

We are now launching a pilot outreach and consumer education program, "Food Makes a Difference." This is a cooperative effort involving several arms of the Department of Agriculture, representatives of the food marketing industry, voluntary groups and other private and public organizations. It is an information-action program designed to help low-income families particularly get more and better food through better use of existing resources, through expansion of food assistance to those who need it most and through greater understanding of how to shop wisely and eat well.

There is a role, a very effective role, for you -- professionally and as a concerned citizen in the war on hunger.

The Department of Agriculture welcomes, indeed, invites your support of our efforts to meet the food needs of low income and needy people. We welcome your support of the principle that food is a basic need and that no one should go without food because of economics or ignorance.

We ask you to consider how you might lend your professional expertise to the enormous job of reaching more low-income families with reliable, practical information on how they can use low cost foods to prepare attractive and nutritious menus. Can any of your regular materials be adapted or channeled to the low-income food stamp shopper? We would welcome the opportunity of talking with you further on this subject.

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As individuals some of you may already be involved in this campaign against hunger. All across the Nation volunteer workers are assisting the effort in various ways, from providing transportation for the poor and the elderly to the food stamp office or the food store, to doing clerical work in food distribution centers.

In many areas with food programs, a number of groups are attempting to show needy people how to make best use of their food stamps. Neighborhood workers or volunteers call on families individually or they may hold food demonstrations. Lending your knowledge of food and communications skill to these programs would be a great service to the poor and satisfying to you.

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USDA 3567-68

U. S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary

Several weeks ago one of the weekly newsletters published by a charter member of the Washington association of political pundits carried a run-down of speculation as to those who might be potential members of the next Cabinet. Opposite the post of Secretary of Agriculture was the phrase, "Who wants it?"

I suppose that looking at the job in one way, it might be good for a few minutes on "Laugh-In"; most Secretaries of Agriculture, in the public mind, are more to be censured than pitied. It is a job that requires an infinite capacity for rolling with the punches.

In an urban society, people tend to view any Secretary of Agriculture as not relevant, as an anachronism. Few realize that the Secretary and his Department have a national constituency -- every individual in the country. And that the Secretary and his Department have the responsibility -- among many responsibilities -- to insure a completely adequate supply of food for the American people, and to meet our foreign commitments.

This responsibility extends further than just the assurance this food is clean, wholesome and available in the grocery store; this responsibility extends to seeing to it this food gets to the pantry shelf for low-income families and to the plates of children in school and in other activities -- with special emphasis on reaching children in low-income areas.

I have talked and I have warned for years now that in large measure many of the problems confronting the cities are the product of

Address by Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman at the opening of the Falls Church High School Student Council's Christmas Food drive, Falls Church, Virginia, at 2 p.m. (EST) Wednesday, December 11, 1968.

the agricultural revolution. Few listened until recently -- few saw the relationship between the rural uprooting and the building crisis of urban unrest. Poverty in education, poverty in job-skills were not discovered in the ghetto; they moved as the rural residents moved to the city. These people were not escaping poverty. Most of them -- if not all -- brought their problems with them in an effort to survive.

How have we acted to meet this problem? How has suburbia, the citadel of middle class affluence, the power base of democracy in Mid-century, reacted?

The drive you are conducting to collect food is an admirable symbol of offering what you have in abundance. Although I know Mayor Washington will accept your offering gracefully on behalf of those who need help, do not be surprised if some groups express resentment. Respect is more in demand than charity -- opportunity is more acceptable than a hand-out. To some in the urban areas your symbolic gesture will reinforce what they were sure they knew all along -- the affluent suburbs regard the city as one vast ghetto of trouble and poverty. A nice place to visit during the daylight hours -- a pleasant place to work as long as you can head back across the river barrier come evening.

Others will say that Christmas baskets are fine, but what about New Year's and the Fourth of July and Labor Day, and every other day in the week?

Good food is a day-in-day-out need.

That is why we have worked so hard over these past eight years to develop delivery systems that will assure food on the table day-in and day-out.

That is why I am announcing today some changes in the Food Stamp Program. You are the first to hear about it. As soon as we can get the changes made in all the States, we are going to see to it that families with net incomes of under \$70 a month get more food for less cash, under the Food Stamp Program.

Last year we moved to reduce the purchase requirement for the poorest of the poor to 50 cents a person per month with a maximum payment of \$3.00 for a family of six or more. This will remain the same but these families will receive more coupons.

For example, a family of four with a monthly income of \$20 in Virginia, now pays \$2.00 and gets \$48.00 worth of food stamps. After the program changes, they will pay \$2.00 and get \$58.00 worth of food stamps.

A family of four with a monthly income of \$50.00 in Virginia now pays \$22.00 for \$58.00 worth of stamps. In the future, they will be paying only \$18.00 for \$60.00 worth of stamps.

I would like to do more since much more needs doing; I wish we could do more, but we are doing all that we can with what the American people have given us.

We did just recently add another 235 areas to the Food Stamp Program. When we get all of these into operation, we will have well over 3 million people in 43 States and the District of Columbia participating in the Food Stamp Program. Added to these are another 3.5 million low-income people who are receiving donated foods under the Direct Distribution Program.

This means that at a time of unparalleled prosperity, we have over 6 million people participating in food assistance programs for families. And bear in mind that almost 40 percent of these are people who are not on welfare -- although they have welfare level incomes but who aren't eligible for welfare because they don't fit into one of the categories. The only help they get is through the USDA.

Who are they? Some are the elderly living on limited pensions -- others are working part time, and others are fully employed but at wages that deny a fair standard of living.

It takes time and money and a continuing battle for both authority and money to see to it that people really have full access to a good diet. We haven't arrived yet, but we are in much better shape than we were even several years ago.

I want to outline for you a few of the things we have been able to accomplish -- I have announced these steps as they were taken, but announcements by the Secretary of Agriculture have a tendency to be carried on that page of the newspaper that follows the last page.

* * * We have increased the variety of foods from the five offered under the commodity donation program in 1960 to 22 foods -- enriched and selected to meet almost completely the full dietary allowances recommended by the National Research Council.

* * * We have one or the other family food assistance programs operating in areas where more than 85 percent of our population lives. I pledged some months back that one or the other of these programs would be in operation in the 1,000 lowest income counties in the country.

At that time, we were in all but about 330 of these counties. This has now been done. We are helping to pay the local costs in 186 counties and are actually operating the donation program in 49 counties where the local governments refused to do so even with our financial help.

There are still about 480 counties where no food program is available or planned, including some 50 counties and independent cities in Virginia. I intend to begin steps to assure the families who need food assistance in these areas will be served before another year passes.

* * * We are distributing a special supplementary food package to new and expectant mothers and to infants and young children in low-income areas. These supplementary foods include evaporated milk and corn syrup for formula making, iron-enriched baby cereal and fortified fruit juices. These foods are being distributed through health centers and clinics virtually as though they were part of a medical prescription.

* * * Looking back, we have made equally dramatic progress in improving the delivery systems for reaching children and young people, although each step was a struggle. But we fought for and got:

1. In 1962 an amendment to the National School Lunch Act to authorize a higher rate of payment per meal to schools that enrolled children of low-income families. We did not get any money for this until the 1965-66 school year and then only a very limited amount that did not go very far when spread nation-wide.

2. In 1964, the Child Nutrition Act that authorized a pilot School Breakfast Program and assistance to low-income area schools for the purchase of food service equipment. Again, the legislation was enacted but the appropriation was miniscule.

3. In 1968, the Vanik bill that extended food service assistance to children in groups outside the school -- children in day-care centers, settlement houses, neighborhood houses and summer day camps. The Vanik bill also extended the Breakfast Program for another three years. We opened the first of the day care center food projects a few weeks ago in Gary, Indiana, and more are opening each week.

4. In 1968, we made a real break-through in funding for the food programs for needy children. For the first time we are in a position to really move out and reach hundreds of thousands of additional children in urban elementary schools and remote rural schools.

We were very much aware that all too many schools -- especially those in urban areas and in more remote rural areas -- could not afford a lunch program. These were schools that had no food service facilities, and no money to buy them. These were schools where children could afford only a token payment at best. These were schools where the children most needed both a lunch and breakfast program.

This was a deep and galling irony. Suburban schools were springing up all over the country with well equipped kitchens and cafeterias, and the young people were participating in the lunch program by the millions.

Yet the school lunch program was a ready-made tool -- a real mechanism for getting a good nutritious meal to a youngster -- a way of

assuring at least one-third to one-half of his daily nutritional needs however little his parents might know about what that child should have to eat at home.

We explained to the Congress over and over again that we had no intention of trying to duplicate those suburban facilities in every inner-city elementary school in the country. We knew, because some cities had tried it, that a few extra pieces of equipment in a junior or senior high would make it possible for them to serve a group of satellite schools. We knew there were new ways, new techniques for preparing and serving food.

And we are beginning to really move. For more than a year we've had a real drive going under Operation Metropolitan to get meals to youngsters in the downtown areas.

We are now putting together a complete model food package in five Model Cities in cooperation with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. We want to show what can be done with an all-out effort. We want to make it as convenient as possible for low-income families in these model neighborhoods to participate fully in a food assistance program whether it be the donation program or the Food Stamp Program. We need to reach out and explain the importance of good nutrition to these families -- young and old. We want both a breakfast or a lunch program in every school in these model neighborhoods.

You can help us. Every man, woman and child in this country can help us. You can't deliver a food basket every day, but you can help us with your support for these programs, and your efforts to reach those who need what these programs can provide.

You now have a Food Stamp Program in Fairfax County. There has been one in the District of Columbia for several years. We in the Department of Agriculture cannot alone begin to get the word out as to its availability, and the importance of using it.

We have to rely on the community to do the job. We have to rely on church groups and civic organizations and interested individuals and local officials to show some concern for their own -- for example, to organize carpools to get the elderly or the disabled to and from the food stamp issuance office or the commodity distribution center, or to serve as proxies for the elderly or disabled. We have to rely on you to take a look at your lunch and breakfast programs to see that the needy children have a chance for a decent diet.

We need people to help on nutrition education drives in their communities. We have materials that set forth the nutrition story in the simplest possible terms -- we have leaflets and movies and we have slide series. We can't do this job by ourselves.

As I mentioned earlier, we still have a long way to go. We should bring a family food assistance program to every home that needs it, and we should apply a single standard of need whether Virginia is involved or New York, or California. We want to make still more adjustments in the food stamp program so that no family will have to

pay more than 25 percent of its income and still receive enough food stamps for a fully adequate diet. This will require several billion dollars and the pre-condition to achieving this goal is public support. We should have a meal for every needy child in every school or wherever that child can be reached, and reached year-round.

We have cared long and deeply, 365 and 366 days of the year for eight years about the challenge of hunger and malnutrition.

It has been a lonely vigil, and our critics have been harsh. It will continue to be a lonely struggle so long as the American people assume that a basket of food at Christmas is an adequate response.

I hope that you consider the food you gather for the poor this Christmas as the beginning -- and not the conclusion -- of your commitment to end hunger in America.

If it is the beginning, then there is hope that your generation will have the capacity to carry out the vision which my generation only now has grasped.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Flower DU 8-7047
McDavid DU 8-4026

Washington, Dec. 10, 1968

For Release 2:00 P.M. (EST) Wednesday, Dec. 11

Freeman Announces Food Stamp Liberalization:

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman today announced a liberalization of the Food Stamp Program which will improve benefits to more than 500,000 persons.

Mr. Freeman made the announcement in an address to the student body of the Falls Church high school, where the Student Council is launching a Christmas food drive for the District of Columbia's inner-city poor.

The liberalization of the Food Stamp Program will take effect in February, the Secretary said, and described the changes in these words:

"As soon as we can get the changes made in all the States, we are going to see to it that families with net incomes of under \$70 a month get more food for less cash. At present more than 500,000 persons in the program are in families with this income level.

"For example, a family of four with a monthly income of \$20 in Virginia now pays \$2.00 and gets \$48 worth of Food Stamps. After the program changes, they will pay \$2 and get \$58 worth of stamps. A family of four with a monthly income of \$50 in Virginia now pays \$22 for \$58 worth of stamps. In the future, they will be paying only \$18 for \$60 worth of stamps."

The Secretary congratulated the Falls Church students for their concern for hungry people at Christmas-time, but emphasized that concern for the hungry is a year-around responsibility for all who want to see hunger and malnutrition wiped out in America.

"Concern at Christmas or Thanksgiving isn't enough," he said. "We must all be concerned 365 days a year, and we must work at converting that concern into positive action. If we do that, then we can soon attain the goal of an adequate diet for every American everywhere."

Mr. Freeman said the existence of hunger in America was intolerable.

"So long as we are blessed by the Almighty with food abundance, such abundance that at times it threatens a decent income for our farmers," he said, "the existence of a single hungry American is a contradiction of the American Dream -- and our Judeo-Christian ethic."

He noted that today's youth are demanding participation in the great decisions of our time.

"This is good," he said. "This is a compliment to them and to our country. Today's young people are better informed, more active, and more humanitarian than ever before. But it isn't enough to demand, to make speeches, to march or picket or sit-in. They must assume an active responsibility at the same time they demonstrate their concern."

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Mr. Freeman called upon the students and their parents to help in the fight against domestic hunger.

"You can't deliver a food basket every day," he said, "but you can help us with your support for our food programs. Without broad citizen effort to reach those who need what these programs can provide we will never be able to banish hunger from this land."

"We have to rely on the community to do the job. We have to rely on church groups and civic organizations and interested individuals and local officials to show some concern for their own -- for example, to demand a food program in counties that have none; to monitor the programs in counties that have them to be sure they are well and fairly administered; to organize car pools to get the elderly and the disabled to and from the Food Stamp issuance office or the commodity distribution center, or to serve as proxies for the elderly or disabled. We have to rely on you to take a look at your school lunch and breakfast programs to see that the needy children have a chance for a decent diet."

The Secretary said the Department of Agriculture needs volunteers to help on nutrition education drives in their communities.

"We have materials that set forth the nutrition story in the simplest possible terms -- we have leaflets and movies and we have slide series. We can't do this job by ourselves."

The Secretary said the Department was hard at work doing all that it could with what the American people have given it, but he emphasized that much more needs doing.

He pointed out that the Department has increased the variety of foods offered under the commodity donation program from 5 in 1960 to 22 today; that the Department has one or the other family food assistance programs operating in areas where more than 85 percent of our population lives; that food programs are now in operation in the 1,000 lowest income counties in the nation and that the USDA is helping pay local costs in 186 of these counties and is actually operating the donation program in 49 counties where the local governments have refused to do so even with USDA financial help.

The Secretary also cited the special supplementary food package now being distributed to new and expectant mothers and to infants and young people in low-income areas. These foods are being distributed through health centers and clinics.

"Looking back," he said, "we have made equally dramatic progress in improving the delivery systems for reaching children and young people, although each step was a struggle. But we fought for and got:

"1. In 1962 an amendment to the National School Lunch Act to authorize a higher rate of payment per meal to schools that enrolled

(more)

children of low-income families. We did not get any money for this until the 1965-66 school year and then only a very limited amount that did not go very far when spread nation-wide.

"2. In 1964, the Child Nutrition Act that authorized a pilot School Breakfast Program and assistance to low-income area schools for the purchase of food service equipment. Again, the legislation was enacted but the appropriation was miniscule.

"3. In 1968, the Vanik Bill that extended food service assistance to children in groups outside the school ... The Vanik Bill also extended the School Breakfast program for another three years.

"4. In 1968, we made a real break-through in funding for the food programs for needy children with a special \$45 million appropriation to provide free or reduced price lunches. For the first time, we are in a position to really move out and reach hundreds of thousands of additional children in urban elementary schools and remote rural schools."

The Secretary also reported that the USDA is now putting together a complete model food package in five Model Cities in cooperation with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

"We want to show what can be done with an all-out effort. We want to make it as convenient as possible for low-income families in these neighborhoods to participate fully in a food assistance program. We need to reach out and explain the importance of good nutrition to these families -- young and old. We want both a breakfast or a lunch program in every school in these neighborhoods."

The Secretary emphasized that despite the progress made in the past eight years, "we still have a long way to go."

"The goal," he said, "is to bring a family food assistance program to every home that needs it, and we should apply a single standard of need whether Virginia is involved or New York, or California. We want to make still more adjustments in the food stamp program so that no family will have to pay more than 25 percent of its income and still receive enough food stamps for a fully adequate diet. This will require substantial appropriation increases. The pre-condition to getting the appropriations to achieve this goal is clear and simple: overwhelming public support. A balanced, nutritious meal for every needy child in every school or wherever that child can be reached should be available every day throughout the year.

"The USDA has cared long and deeply, 365 and 366 days of the year for eight years about the challenge of hunger and malnutrition," Mr. Freeman

(more)

said in conclusion. "Until very recently, it has been a lonely vigil. It will continue to be a lonely struggle so long as the American people assume that a basket of food at Christmas is an adequate response.

"I hope that you consider the food you gather for the poor this Christmas as the beginning -- and not the conclusion -- of your commitment to end hunger in America. If it is the beginning, then there is hope that your generation will have the capacity to carry out the vision that my generation only now has grasped.

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USDA 3848-68

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Harris DU 8-7048
McDavid DU 8-4026

Washington, Dec. 13, 1968

USDA Increases Cash Payments for School Lunches Served to Needy:

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman today announced a revision in the National School Lunch Program that will help local schools provide more free and reduced-price lunches to children from needy families.

The Secretary said the revision is possible because Congress authorized the U.S. Department of Agriculture to use \$43 million of Section 32 funds to expand school food service to needy children. Based on State plans, the Department estimated that more than one million additional children from low income families could start getting school lunches under the revised program.

With the new funds, USDA is able to allow States to provide a higher reimbursement rate to schools that need to reach more needy children under the School Lunch Program. The rate change will enable local school food programs to be reimbursed at a higher rate-per-meal than they were getting previously for helping feed school children from low-income families.

The rate revision means that more schools will be able to take part in the National School Lunch Program, thus increasing the number of children and areas benefiting from the program, Secretary Freeman said. Likewise, it will help schools already in the program serve more free and reduced-price lunches.

The basic provision of the rate change will mean that schools serving specially needy areas will have the option of qualifying under either of two rate schedules. Under one schedule, these schools can continue to receive their present rate of reimbursement on all lunches, with the maximum being 9 cents for each lunch. These schools can receive up to 25 cents additional for each free or reduced-price lunch served.

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The other schedule would permit specially needy schools to receive up to a maximum of 20 cents each for all lunches served. They formerly could get a maximum of 15 cents each for all lunches.

The rates of reimbursement for all other schools will remain the same. These schools can still receive up to 9 cents for each lunch served depending on availability of funds in each State and on need of the individual school. As a national average, schools now receive 5 cents in cash for each complete lunch served.

State school lunch agencies determine the actual level of reimbursement based on the relative need of the school for additional assistance required to reach more needy children.

Secretary Freeman said the new rate revision is aimed at "bringing reimbursements nearer to the actual costs of foods bought locally, so schools can provide more free and reduced-price meals to children." He said that schools can better afford to supply the meals with the new reimbursement rates.

"This increased support for school lunch programs will give participating schools the broader financial aid they might need to feed more and better meals to our country's poor children," the Secretary said. "And this moves us a little closer to our ultimate goal of assuring that every American child, no matter how poor, will get nutritious meals both at home and at school."

He said the rate increase basically will help school food programs in inner city areas and isolated rural areas where the bulk of schools are located that serve children from low-income families. But he added that a school in any area of the country needing assistance for feeding poor children could benefit from the new rates.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Vincent DU 8-5015
McDavid DU 8-4026

Washington, Dec. 30, 1968

\$288 Million in USDA-Donated Foods is Assured for School Lunches:

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman today said that the Nation's schools can be assured of at least \$288 million in donated foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help expand and improve school food service during the current school year.

"Buying began as early as last May, in a concerted Federal-State effort to use every resource to help schools maintain their food services for children at lowest possible prices," the Secretary said. "We wanted the State educational agencies and schools to have as much information as possible on donated foods available to help them plan for stocking cafeteria larders for the school year." He noted that for the entire 1967-68 school year, schools received more than \$276 million worth of these donated foods.

Secretary Freeman pointed out that Federal cash and food aid through the 22-year-old National School Lunch Program, administered nationally by the Consumer and Marketing Service, covers about 20 percent of program costs. Children's payments, together with States and local contributions, make up the remainder. About 80 percent of the food used in the nationwide lunch program is bought by local officials from local suppliers. These local purchases by the schools amounted to about \$1 billion last school year.

USDA has purchased or contracted for more than 238 million pounds of frozen ground beef, butter, cheese, lard or shortening, nonfat dry milk, peanut butter, and frozen turkeys, Secretary Freeman noted. Still more will be bought and allocated to schools during the year. In addition schools may obtain as much as they can effectively use of such foods as dry beans, bulgur, corn grits, cornmeal, flour, rolled oats, rice and rolled wheat. USDA acquires these foods through its price support and surplus-removal activities.

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Besides giving a boost to school lunches for about 20 million youngsters, the foods will help to reach almost 400,000 children needing school breakfasts.

Secretary Freeman said that USDA has bought so far this year, \$45 million worth of canned fruits and vegetables, and frozen poultry and meat specifically for schools taking part in the National School Lunch Program. Under authorities of the National School Lunch Act, extra food is provided every year to help schools meet the high nutrition standard of the program at low cost. At present, the special-purchase foods total 228 million pounds of canned apricots, green beans, corn, peaches, peas, pineapple, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and frozen cut-up chickens and frozen ground pork.

Secretary Freeman noted that USDA's other food-aid programs are also being expanded to benefit more of the Nation's needy.

USDA's food donations to needy families, for example, are now more than 36 pounds per person per month and include canned meat and poultry, scrambled egg mix, canned milk, canned vegetables, assorted fruit juices, and other highly nutritious foods. Less than a year ago, before additional foods were available for donation, the allotment per person per month was about 25 pounds. (See USDA press release 3911-68, dated Dec. 17, 1968.)

USDA recently announced a liberalization of its Food Stamp Program that will benefit more than 500,000 persons in families with net incomes under \$70 a month. Beginning in February 1969, these needy persons will receive more food-stamp coupons for the same or smaller purchase requirements. (See USDA press release 3848-68, dated Dec. 10, 1968.)

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