

## HUNGER IN AMERICA, 1965-1969

In April 1967, Senators Robert Kennedy (D-N.Y.) and Joseph Clark (D-Pa.) of the Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty came to Mississippi to hold hearings on anti-poverty programs. At the urging of Marian Wright, a lawyer for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the two Senators made an unscheduled tour of poor black homes in the Mississippi Delta, and in the course of that tour the two "rediscovered" the existence of "raw hunger," or starvation, in America. Following the publicity given to the Kennedy-Clark findings, a flurry of Congressional hearings, numerous reports and studies, and a television documentary brought the problem of hunger into public awareness.

In April 1968, the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs was established "to study the food, medical, and other related basic needs among the people of the United States" and to make recommendations necessary "to establish a coordinated program which will assure every U.S. resident adequate food, medical assistance, and other related basic necessities of life and health."<sup>1</sup> This case examines existing federal efforts--as of early 1969--to address the problem of poverty-related hunger; in particular, the case examines the food assistance programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Consumer and Marketing Service (C&MS).

The Extent of the Problem<sup>2</sup>

In investigating hunger in America, the Select Committee was confronting a problem of unknown but possibly massive proportions. One way of gauging the prevalence of hunger is by estimating the number of households that are so poor that they cannot afford to purchase a nutritionally adequate diet. The cost of such a diet is periodically calculated by USDA using what it calls the "economy food plan" as the standard for a minimally adequate diet. In 1969, USDA set the cost of the economy food plan at \$1,200 for a family of four; the Social Security Administration's "poverty index" defines a family of four as too poor to afford this minimal diet if its income is less than three times that figure, or \$3,600.\* By these standards, in 1969 there were 5.1 million persons living in households with annual incomes less than \$1,200 (or the equivalent for households with other than four members), 9.3 million in households with annual incomes between \$1,200 and \$2,400, and 10.6 million in households with annual incomes between \$2,400 and \$3,600--all of whom were by the federal government's own definitions too poor to buy a minimally adequate diet.

\*In comparison, a family with an annual income of \$15,000 or more spent at most 22.5% of its income on food in 1965.<sup>3</sup>

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Moreover, by USDA's own admission, the \$1,200 economy food plan was designed solely for use in emergency situations and would be nutritionally inadequate as a steady diet. The "low budget food plan," considered by nutritionists to be the minimally adequate diet for regular consumption, cost \$1,500 for a family of four in 1969; with a poverty index of \$4,500, an additional 13 million persons were too poor in 1969 to purchase a diet that would be nutritionally adequate when consumed on a regular basis. Thus, as many as 38 million Americans--nearly 1 in 5--were possible victims of malnutrition.

The fact that a family was considered by the federal government as too poor to purchase a nutritionally adequate diet is not direct evidence of malnutrition. But USDA's 1965 Household Food Consumption Survey yielded more direct evidence: half of the 7,500 households surveyed

had diets that failed to meet the recommended dietary allowances set by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council for one or more [essential] nutrients. About one-fifth of the sample had "poor" diets--their food intake provided less than two-thirds of the NRC allowance for one or more [essential] nutrients.<sup>4</sup>

Even more direct evidence of malnutrition in the United States was provided by the National Nutrition Survey, conducted by the United Public Health Service in 1968-1969. The Survey tested over 12,000 individuals in lower-income census districts in ten states; 80 percent of those tested had annual incomes under \$5,000. As summarized by the Select Committee,

... one-third of the children under 6 years and 15 percent of the total sample population were found to be anemic, to have hemoglobin levels in the "unacceptable range"; 3.5 percent of the children X-rayed showed evidence of retarded bone growth; vitamin A, essential for the formation of cells and for normal vision, was found to be at unacceptable levels for 33 percent of the children under 6 and 13 percent of the population; vitamin C, important for normal tooth and bone formation, wound healing and resistance to infection was found at less than acceptable levels in 12 to 16 percent of all age groups; vitamin D, necessary for the absorption of calcium and the normal development of bones, was found to be at less than acceptable levels for 3.7 percent of all children under 6 years.<sup>5</sup>

Such malnutrition is particularly important when it occurs in the early years of a person's life, the years of most rapid physical and mental development. As the Select Committee put it,

... hunger and malnutrition as found in this country, coupled with other social and economic factors, can and does have a direct and major adverse effect on the normal physical and mental development of its victims.

More specifically, malnutrition and undernutrition among poor American children can and does result in--

- apathy, listlessness, and loss of energy and ability to concentrate, slowness of comprehension, inattention, restlessness, behavioral problems, and retarded learning among pre-school and school children;
- lowered resistance to disease and infection; and
- general retardation in the mental and physical growth of children who are its victims.

In short, the intellectual growth, learning capacity and physical capabilities of children among low-income families in the United States is seriously compromised by hunger and malnutrition.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, in one of its most startling findings, the Survey discovered and clinically validated at least seven cases of marasmus and kwashiorkor--caloric and protein starvation, hitherto thought to occur only in such obviously poor countries as India. In short, in the most affluent nation in history, people were--quite literally--dying of hunger. What was the federal government doing about it?

### Federal Food Assistance Programs

In 1969, existing federal efforts directly concerning the hunger problem consisted of a variety of food assistance programs administered by USDA through the Consumer and Marketing Service.\* (See Exhibit 1 for a USDA organization chart and Appendix A for a description of C&MS's other functions.) C&MS food programs fell into two categories: Family Feeding Programs, which included the Commodity Distribution and Food Stamp Programs; and Child Nutrition Programs, which included the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, School Equipment, and Special Milk Programs. The following sections briefly describe each of these programs.

#### Family Feeding Programs

The two family feeding programs were the commodity distribution program, which distributed food to poor persons, and the food stamp program, which enabled poor people to purchase food stamps with which they could buy food at retail stores.

Commodity Distribution Program (CD).\*\* Under this program, foods acquired by the federal government through USDA price support and surplus removal programs were made available to local governments for donation to low-income families where state and local authorities\*\*\* agreed to bear the costs of certifying

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\*Under a reorganization plan effective August 8, 1969, the food assistance functions of C&MS were split off and transferred to a new agency, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). This case will refer solely to C&MS.

\*\*Also known as Direct Distribution or DD.

\*\*\*Typically, state and county welfare departments or offices.

recipients' eligibility\* and of storing and distributing the food. In a number of counties in several states, the Office of Economic Opportunity provided assistance in meeting the local costs of program operation and administration. The foods acquired under this program were also available to children in school lunch programs, summer camps, and childcare centers; to needy people in nonprofit institutions; and for use in disaster relief. In 1969, participation in the commodity distribution program was holding steady at approximately 3.8 million people, at a total federal cost of \$321,522,000. Authority for the program was contained in section 32 of the Agriculture Adjustment Act as amended, section 416 of the Agriculture Act of 1949, as amended, and section 709 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965.

The amount and kinds of food distributed under CD were determined by 1) the funding level legislated by Congress (which in turn depended on anticipated participation levels); 2) commodity costs; and 3) the needs of the surplus disposal program. The Secretary of Agriculture designated commodities as surplus and therefore eligible for purchase and distribution under CD. The process of deciding which commodities were "surplus" had a strong political component: congressmen intervened to ensure that their favored foodstuffs were included or excluded, depending on market conditions.\*\* The actual decision to participate in CD rested with county officials, who also chose which of the available foodstuffs their county would distribute. Regional C&MS officials seeking to sell local officials on the CD program often had to overcome a reluctance to participate based in some cases on the fact that localities had to bear the administrative costs and in some cases on an unwillingness to help persons of minority races or lower socio-economic classes. If a county applied for participation, C&MS would generally certify it as eligible if funds were available.

Regional C&MS public information staffs heavily publicized the availability of a CD program. For new programs, press releases, spot announcements, taped interviews, and canned feature films were prepared and distributed to local media--radio, television, and newspapers. For on-going programs, a regular flow of information to these media was maintained, and C&MS officials made periodic visits to encourage its use. (One problem with this type of publicity is that mass media often do not reach the poor, especially the rural poor. To supplement media marketing efforts and to help people use CD foods to maximum nutritional advantage, C&MS in 1968 began developing a "nutrition aide" program.) The actual physical distribution of foodstuffs was in the hands of local officials; distribution was theoretically carried out under USDA regulations designed to prevent spoilage, contamination, etc.\*\*\* The Senate Select Committee found numerous instances of violations of these regulations. Moreover, since

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\*Certification procedures and eligibility standards under CD were similar to those under the Food Stamp program (see below).

\*\*For example, sugar is excluded by law from the CD program, with the result that diets based on CD foodstuffs are deficient in calories. In another case, Congressman (later Republican National Chairman) Rogers C.B. Morton sought help for his Maryland tomato-processor constituents, who had canned more tomatoes than they could sell; USDA declared tomatoes in surplus, thus making them eligible for federal purchase and distribution under CD.

\*\*\*In some cases these regulations imposed added burdens on the poor--for example, a requirement that foodstuffs be distributed only from a warehouse satisfying USDA regulations forced recipients to travel long distances transporting heavy sacks of food, since few counties had more than one such facility.

the program was essentially a state and local welfare program, C&MS had little control over possible civil rights or other violations. As of 1969, there was no regular reporting mechanism to detect such abuses as denial of benefits on racial grounds; and as the law then stood, C&MS's only effective sanction if such abuses did come to its attention was to assume direct control of program administration in the offending locality--a sanction C&MS was reluctant to use.

Food Stamp Program. C&MS administered this program through state welfare agencies (with federally approved plans of operation) under the authority of the Food Stamp Act of 1965. Participants exchanged the amount of money they would normally spend for food for an allotment of food coupons of higher monetary value. The coupons were then used to buy food in any C&MS approved retail store. In 1969, participation in the food stamp program had reached an estimated 3.6 million participants in 1,489 cities and counties, at a total federal cost of \$279,908,000.

The poor person seeking food stamp assistance started by visiting the local administering agency (usually a city or county welfare office) to establish his eligibility, i.e., his poverty. Eligibility criteria varied from state to state but typically included limits on income and assets. Thus, the applicant was required to bring with him (her) documents such as medical bills, rent receipts, wage statements, bank books and the like that would establish the household's level of poverty. In states with a work requirement, the applicant typically had to either register for work with the local employment office or bring proof of mental or physical unfitness for work or failure to find work.

If the welfare worker determined that the applicant was eligible for food stamps, s/he would issue a card stating that fact and showing the amount the applicant had to pay for a dollar's worth of food stamps. That amount ranged in 1969 from 20 percent to 45 percent of the family's monthly income. For example, a family of four with a monthly income of \$80 would have to pay \$36 (45 percent of their monthly income) to get food stamps worth \$72. Stamps were available for purchase at food stamp issuance offices\* and generally had to be bought all at one time each month. The recipient would use the stamps in lieu of money to purchase food items at a participating retail food store; non-food items were not covered, and no store was required to accept the stamps. Participating stores redeemed the stamps for cash through wholesale food concerns or banks, which in turn redeemed them through the U.S. Treasury.

The greater complexity of the food stamp program (as compared to CD) was matched by a more elaborate administrative structure. Where the regional C&MS official in charge of food assistance had only a single deputy for the CD program, he had both a regional deputy and local project officers (PO's) for the stamp program. The PO's, who were assigned one or more food stamp projects depending on project size, had legal authority only over the retailers participating in the program but in practice also functioned as trouble-shooters with the local administering agency (usually the county welfare office). Again, however, PO's lacked legal authority over local officials. Localities wishing to participate in the stamp program applied to C&MS through their state's

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\*Usually the local welfare office or a participating bank.

administering agency (again, usually the welfare department); as of 1968, applications exceeded available funding. To get around this constraint, counties often underestimated their expected level of participation. Since the participation level could not be controlled once a project was started,\* C&MS responded by underestimating the number of projects it could fund in a given fiscal year or overestimating project costs in its appropriations requests. Although C&MS publicity efforts paralleled those for CD, the most effective salesmen of the program were local retailers who stood to gain added business or community groups who wanted the program in their area.

### Child Nutrition Programs

In 1969, C&MS oversaw four programs designed specifically to improve the nutrition of school children. Most of the administration of these programs was in the hands of state and local education agencies. The reporting procedures for all of these programs emphasized prevention of fraud and profit-making rather than ensuring that every child received adequate nutrition. In part, this reflected the lobbying efforts of the American School Food Service Association (ASFSA), an organization composed of workers in public school food service programs and thus desirous of keeping private food management companies out of this field.

National School Lunch Program. Under the authority of the National School Lunch Act of 1946, this program provided financial assistance to public (and nonprofit private) schools of high school grade or under on the basis of their need for assistance and the number of meals served. Federal funds were matched on a three to one basis from sources within the states. Participating schools also received foods bought specifically to help them meet meal standards, and they were eligible for foods acquired under USDA's price support and surplus removal programs. In 1969, 19 million children received school lunches (272,000 at a reduced price) at a total federal cost of \$162,041,000; state and local agencies paid the costs of preparing and serving the food. In some cases, investigators discovered that states and localities were diverting funds meant to assist children from low income families to hold down the price of regular school lunches, consumed primarily by middle class children.

Pilot School Breakfast Program. This program operated under authority of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, providing cash grants to state educational agencies to assist schools in operating nonprofit breakfast programs. First preference was given to schools in low income areas and to schools where children attending travel long distances. In cases of severe need, the grant provided as much as 80% of the cost of operating a breakfast program. Participating schools were also eligible for foods acquired under the price support and surplus removal programs. In 1969, this program reached 200,000 children at a total federal cost of \$3,500,000.

School Equipment Program. Not all schools participated in the child nutrition programs. The bulk of those not participating were old inner city schools which had been built as neighborhood schools from which children would return home for lunch; the cost of renovating these schools to provide

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\*Anyone meeting the eligibility standards was entitled to buy the stamps.

meal-preparation and serving facilities had proven prohibitive for local school districts. The School Equipment Program, established under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, assisted states through grants-in-aid to supply schools in low-income areas with equipment--other than land and buildings--for storage, preparation, transportation, and serving of food to children. At least one-fourth of the cost of equipment was borne by the state and local government. In 1969, this program equipped an estimated 1,000 schools in needy areas at a total federal expenditure of \$750,000.

Special Milk Program. Established under the Agriculture Act of 1954, this program was designed to increase the consumption of fluid milk by children in nonprofit schools of high school grade and under. Since its establishment in 1955, the program has been extended to include nonprofit nursery schools, child-care centers, settlement houses and similar nonprofit institutions devoted to the care and training of children: in 1969, this program reached some 17 million children in 90,000 schools at a total federal expenditure of \$103,995,000. The program operates by reimbursing local school districts for amounts paid to private dairies. The Milk Program has reached many more schools than the other child nutrition programs.

### Evaluation of Food Assistance Programs

More than one commentator on the hunger problem has agreed that the United States has ample resources to solve the problem of malnutrition: the nation has sufficient food stocks to feed the hungry poor and these food stocks can be enriched with vitamins and proteins at little added expense. Nevertheless, studies conducted in 1969 revealed that domestic food assistance programs had had little impact on the number of poor Americans suffering from malnutrition. Early results of the investigation conducted by the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs showed that the C&MS programs were failing to reach a significant proportion of poor Americans. Specifically, the Committee's investigations found that the two principal family assistance programs--the food stamp and commodity distribution plans--were reaching only approximately 6.4 million of the estimated 25 million poor and 13 million near poor in 1968.<sup>7</sup> The Committee's interim report continued:

In short, these programs have never succeeded in reaching a significant proportion of those in need of help. Analyses of state and county participation in the food stamp and commodity programs reveal another dimension of the participation gap. A recent study by the Consumer and Marketing Service comparing program participation in February 1969 with 1960 census figures of the number of persons in families with incomes under \$3,000 (family of four) in each county with a family food assistance program found that

- in the average food stamp county only 10 percent of the poor are reached with food stamps;
- in the average commodity distribution county only 18 percent of the poor are reached with federally donated foods;
- nationally, only 0.6 percent of the counties with a food stamp program reach over 50 percent of their poor people and only 5 percent of the commodity

counties reach 50 percent of their poor people;  
--the average participation rate for all poor persons living in food stamp counties is 16 percent, and in commodity counties 22 percent.

A poor American family has only one chance in three of living in a county which has a food stamp program, and if it happens to live in such county, it still has only one chance in six of participating in the program.\*

The participation gap is further compounded by a 40-percent decline in participation when a county switches from commodities to food stamps; 1.1 million persons who once received commodities in these counties are not now receiving food stamps. The committee believes that it is essential that the commodity and food stamp programs be operated simultaneously where necessary to take care of this decline in participation.\*\*

Until these family food assistance programs reach at least 14.4 million hard-core poor, we will be a long way from eliminating poverty-related malnutrition in this country.<sup>8</sup>

The Select Committee concluded its interim report with a section calling for both legislative and administrative reform of domestic food assistance programs and noted six areas particularly in need of reform.<sup>9</sup>

--Eligibility standards employed under the food stamp and commodity distribution programs are based on administrative convenience rather than recipient needs, thus permitting wide discrepancies among the eligibility standards of differing states and often counties within each state.

--Purchase and bonus requirements under the food stamp program discriminated against the poorest families. As the following table shows, purchasing requirements based on strict income percentage created a situation in which the poorer the family the less food stamp aid it receives.

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\*Of the 3,120 independent counties and cities in the United States in 1969, approximately 2,600 had either (but not both) a CD or food stamp program.

\*\*The legislation authorizing the family feeding programs prohibited a county from participating in both programs. Because the food stamp program in effect used normal retail channels to distribute food, it was considered less cumbersome to administer than CD; for the same reason, stamps also produced greater profits for food retailers and wholesalers and theoretically guaranteed a greater measure of free choice for benefit recipients. As of 1969, C&MS was encouraging counties to switch from CD to food stamps. Participation declines were probably due to the greater complexity (from the recipient's viewpoint) of the stamp program and from the other barriers to participation discussed below.



Purchase requirement  
(standard schedule)

Family income (monthly, family of 4 persons)	Amount	Percent of income	Total stamp value	Cost of adequate diet	Deficit in purchase power
\$10 -----	\$ 2	20	\$ 60	---\$100-120---	\$40-60
\$50 -----	20	40	64	---100-120---	36-56
\$80 -----	36	45	72	---100-120---	28-48
\$100-----	44	44	78	---100-120---	22-42
\$150-----	56	37	86	---100-120---	14-34
\$200-----	68	34	92	---100-120---	8-28
\$250-----	76	30	100	100-120---	0-20
\$300-----	\$84	28	\$108	\$100-120---	\$ 0-12

--Certification procedures for food stamp recipients are unnecessarily long, complicated, and humiliating, thus discouraging participation.

--The method of delivery of benefits, in many instances, compromises the effectiveness of the food stamp program. Participants in many counties are required to purchase their total monthly stamp allotment at one time. Stamps are frequently sold at centrally located county welfare offices or banks, requiring travel during working hours to purchase stamps. Commodities are also inaccessible to participants. Few counties have more than one distribution point, forcing the recipient to travel long distances, pay transportation costs and have home facilities to store an entire month's supply of food. Since the commodity distribution program requires a public delivery system, separate warehousing and a central distribution point, many counties fail to stock otherwise available items due to lack of storage or handling facilities. Available storage facilities are often inadequate, resulting in spoilage.

--Local obstruction in the form of too few administrators, too short hours, humiliating investigation, or--in some cases--refusal of local officials to help their own citizens, discourages participation. The law now permits USDA to administer the commodity distribution program directly where a county will not assume responsibility.

--Ineffective outreach and counseling has resulted in the failure of food stamp programs to reach significant numbers of low-income families.

In addition to defective program design and implementation, the Select Committee pointed to insufficient funding as a reason for the programs' failure to close the "food gap"--the difference between the income poor people have and the income they would need to purchase a minimally adequate diet. The gap between the actual income of the 25 million poor and the "poverty index" income of three times household food cost had been estimated at \$10 billion; the

Select Committee pegged the "food-income gap" at roughly one-third that amount, or \$3.3 billion in 1969. In that year, total federal food assistance expenditures were roughly \$672 million, or about one-fifth of the amount the Select Committee thought necessary. Exhibit 2 presents food assistance expenditure data from 1964 through 1969.

There are various theories as to why federal efforts to feed the poor so largely failed in their purpose. The Citizen's Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition, a private citizens' group that investigated the hunger problem in 1967-1968, stated in its final report, Hunger, U.S.A., that

The failure of federal efforts to feed the poor cannot be divorced from our nation's agricultural policy, the congressional committees that dictate that policy and the Department of Agriculture that implements it; for hunger and malnutrition in a country of abundance must be seen as consequences of a political and economic system that spends billions to remove food from the market, to limit production, to retire land from production, to guarantee and sustain profits for the producer.<sup>10</sup>

With this analysis in mind, the next section will explore the historical origins of the federal food assistance programs; subsequent sections will examine the various actors involved in the formation and implementation of federal agricultural and food assistance policy, including the USDA and the congressional agriculture committees.

### The Origins of Federal Food Assistance

The food assistance programs administered by USDA were born as New Deal responses to the plight of America's farmers. In 1933, when the first food assistance and agricultural price-support legislation was enacted, farmers still comprised over one-quarter of the nation's population.\* But it was a quarter in distress. At the urging of the federal government, U.S. farmers had increased food production during World War I toward the end of supplying both domestic and foreign markets, accomplishing this through increased use of fertilizers and farm machinery and expanded cultivation of farm land. At the close of the war, increased levels of production continued in order to meet relief needs in Europe and the Middle East. However, the rapid contraction of overseas demand beginning in 1920 left farmers in economic bondage, with heavy investments in new machinery and cultivated land and a drastic decline in both demand and prices. "Roaring Twenties" prosperity could not stem a steadily increasing wave of farm foreclosures, and the Depression and the Dust Bowl seemed to condemn the nation's farmers to reap the biblical "grapes of wrath." Nonetheless, USDA proposals for federal aid to reestablish "fair exchange value for farm products" through export "dumping" and price supports received scant support from Presidents Coolidge and Hoover.

By the early 1930's, the plummeting demand for farm products had reached crisis proportions, moving the President of the American Farm Bureau Federation

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\*The figure for 1965 was 6.4%.

to warn that "unless something is done for the American farmer we will have revolution in the countryside within less than 12 months."<sup>11</sup> Between 1929 and 1932, farm prices declined more than 50%, and the net income of farm operators was cut by two-thirds; farms across the country were being sold for debts and taxes.\* In 1933, a newly appointed Secretary of Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace, urged President Roosevelt to ask Congress to take emergency action. The result was the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, which authorized the Secretary of USDA to secure a voluntary reduction in the production of basic commodities<sup>12</sup> through direct payments to farmers for participation in "acreage control" programs. In addition a surplus disposal program--the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation (FRC)--was initiated in 1933 as an emergency supplement to the acreage control program. Finally, the Act introduced federal farm price supports.

With the establishment of the FRC, the Department of Agriculture launched a joint attack on the problems of farm surpluses and poverty-related hunger. During the next four years, the FRC and its successor, the Federal Surplus Commodity Corporation, purchased nearly three billion pounds of surplus food (by railroad carlots) in the producing areas, and then shipped it to various state relief agencies, where it was distributed to families eligible for public assistance. The food distributed included over 932 million pounds of meat and fish; 450 million pounds of grain products; 450 million pounds of potatoes; 133 million pounds of cheese and dry milk; and 104 million pounds of butter and lard. In a 1935 amendment to the Agriculture Adjustment Act (Section 32), the commodity distribution program received a continuing source of funds and became part of a long range agricultural policy. The School Lunch and companion School Milk programs were introduced in 1937 as surplus food programs which served the dual function of providing WPA employment for needy people and food for undernourished school children. By 1939, approximately 4.5 million school children were participating in the lunch program, and an estimated 417,000 were participating in the special school milk program.

Although the commodity distribution programs helped to supplement the diet of needy families and to dispose of surplus farm products, they proved an inadequate solution to the problems of underconsumption and low farm income, and USDA economists sought an alternative that would reduce food costs (and stimulate consumption) without lowering the farmer's return. In May 1939, USDA introduced the food stamp plan through which families with less than \$1,000 total yearly income were able to exchange the amount of money they normally spent on food for an allotment of food coupons with a higher monetary value. The orange food stamps could be used to purchase any food at any grocery store, and for every two orange stamps purchased, one blue stamp--good for the purchase of foods listed as surplus by the Secretary of Agriculture--was given free.<sup>13</sup> Participation in the food stamp program reached 4 million in 1941, and the cost of blue stamps to the Government reached \$261 million. However, by 1943, a new war economy had brought increased employment and demand for food, resulting in a suspension of the food stamp program.

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\*For example, USDA figures showed in the period between 1921 and 1932, one out of every nine Iowa farms was sold one or more times in deficiency judgments.

The most enduring aspect of the New Deal farm program has thus been the series of production controls and price supports originally designed to guarantee "fair" farm incomes, thereby stemming the tide of farm bankruptcies and foreclosures. The most important of these programs is the price support program, administered since 1933 through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). Under this program, Congress sets target prices for designated basic commodities, and a farmer receives a price-support "loan" from CCC equal to the value (computed on the basis of the target price) of his crop. If the actual market price rises above the target price, the farmer can sell his crop, pay off the loan, and pocket his profits. If the market price falls below the target price, the farmer simply "defaults" on his "loan" and CCC gains title to the crop. Crops acquired by CCC under this program are sold in the United States or abroad, transferred to other government agencies, donated to the Food for Peace Program, or distributed through USDA's food assistance programs. The net effect is to guarantee the farmer that if the market price of his crop falls below the target price, he can "sell" his crop to CCC at the target price. The workings of this scheme can be illustrated as follows, assuming a target price of \$90 per unit:

	<u>CCC</u>	<u>Farmer</u>	<u>Purchaser</u>
(1) Loan made	-\$ 90	+\$ 90	
Market goes to \$100			
Crop sold		+\$100	-\$100
Loan repaid	+\$ 90	-\$ 90	
Net	----	+\$100	-\$100
(2) Loan made	-\$ 90	+\$ 90	
Market goes to \$80; "default."			
Net	-\$ 90	+\$ 90	----

It is evident that this system of price supports encourages overproduction, since CCC is a guaranteed buyer for any surpluses. Farm surpluses--and price support payments--reached such high levels during the Eisenhower administration that "voluntary" production controls were instituted. First, eligibility for price support payments is now conditioned on the farmer's agreeing not to plant crops on more than a certain percentage of his land (the "acreage allotment") and not to harvest more than a prescribed quantity of the given crop per acre (the "marketing quota"). These measures help prevent short-term overproduction. A longer-term measure is the "acreage diversion program," which pays the farmer not to grow designated crops on "diverted" acreage, while leaving him free to grow other crops in greater demand. Finally, CCC is authorized to go directly into the market to purchase commodities designated as surplus by the Secretary of Agriculture.

USDA's efforts to increase domestic consumption and maintain acceptable price levels for farm products continued throughout the 1950's despite mounting farm surpluses. The School Milk and (to a lesser extent) the School Lunch programs continued to expand in terms of both participants and federal expenditures. However, with the mid-1950's boom in overall domestic prosperity, USDA became increasingly uncomfortable with the traditional dual purpose of surplus distribution programs. This discomfort was reflected in USDA's reluctance in 1955 to include nonperishable surplus cereal grains such as wheat and corn in the list of direct distribution commodities. In testimony before the Senate Agriculture Committee, one USDA official offered the following explanation of USDA's position on surplus distribution:

The distribution of wheat flour and cornmeal cannot be justified on the basis of the need for disposal operation to prevent the waste of CCC-held commodities. Such distribution would be more in the nature of a welfare or relief program which is not, and should not be the direct responsibility of the Department of Agriculture. . . . The groups eligible to receive surplus commodities are already heavy consumers of cereal products. In other words, the people who have a small amount of money are the ones that really eat the cereal products.

In the case of schools and institutions, it would be very difficult to avoid almost complete displacement of normal commercial purchases of wheat flour and cornmeal. Even among the most needy persons and families, we believe that the donation of wheat flour and cornmeal would result, at best, in only a very small increase in the use of cereal products, if any, even though it might benefit a small group in the population.

. . . we believe we should take advantage of every opportunity to avoid waste by donating perishable or semi-perishable foods to groups who can use them and who otherwise would not get enough of them. As is indicated by the increased volume of surplus foods being distributed, the department is following such a course. These products that we are now putting in there are either perishable or semi-perishable commodities of which people with a small amount of money are not getting enough of and we have them in our stocks and we need to turn and move it and get rid of it. . . . In summary, therefore, in view of the objectives and purposes of the Department's surplus disposal operations:

- (1) Wheat and corn are storable commodities and, with stocks rotation, there is presently no danger of substantial loss waste of CCC-owned stocks.
- (2) The domestic donation of wheat flour and cornmeal cannot be justified on the basis of need for surplus removal operations.

- (3) It would be difficult to avoid substantial displacement of the regular commercial marketings of wheat flour and cornmeal.
- (4) The proposed distribution would be more in the nature a welfare or relief program--not a direct responsibility of the Department of Agriculture and not a proper charge against the price-support program.<sup>14</sup>

The contention that the objective of USDA surplus "disposal" programs was not primarily relief aid for the hungry poor, was reiterated again in 1955 by then USDA Assistant Secretary (later Secretary) Earl Butz at House hearings on the disposal of surplus commodities. Butz stated:

. . . This is a time of relative industrial and urban prosperity in the United States, as we well know. . . . I think from that it is clear that food is not expensive in America. My personal feeling is that the philosophy of subsidized foodstuffs to the American consumer is not consistent with the kind of free enterprise economy we have in this country, and that subsidized food is not the birthright of every American. He gets it cheaply now through the retail market.<sup>15</sup>

USDA was also reluctant during the 1950's to undertake any new food assistance programs while the agricultural market remained healthy. For example, when authorized by a 1959 amendment to the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act to carry out a two-year pilot food stamp program, USDA Secretary Ezra Benson declined to exercise his authority. However, when market prices declined in the early 1960's, food assistance programs were again expanded. Under the Kennedy Administration, USDA increased the number of commodities on the direct distribution list from 18 to 22, and established a pilot food stamp program in several areas of chronic unemployment. Under the Johnson administration, the food stamp program was reinstituted nationwide with the passage of the Food Stamp Act of 1964.

#### The Department of Agriculture<sup>16</sup>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, hailed by Lincoln at its creation as "the people's department," was established by law in 1862 and raised to Cabinet status in 1889. Initially envisioned as a comprehensive government information service charged with "procuring, propagating, and distributing new and valuable seeds" to farmers, the Department quickly expanded its scope of activity to include regulatory functions under the Meat Inspection Act of 1880 as well as scientific and nutritional research aimed at increased and more efficient food production. This rapid expansion of Departmental functions was accompanied by a substantial increase in the number of departmental employees (from 2,444 in 1897 to 13,855 in 1912) and the development of relatively autonomous bureaus with diverse functions in each (e.g., separate bureaus existed for research in plant industry, soils, entomology, chemistry, etc.).

In 1913, USDA Secretary David Houston proposed the first major department reorganization for the purpose of centralizing control over diverse department

programs. Houston proposed to divide the department along functional lines--under services rather than bureaus--which would separate the department's increasing marketing and regulatory role from its research efforts. However, Houston's proposed reorganization received little support either in the department or in Congressional appropriations hearings in January 1914. As a result, a more conservative plan of reorganization emerged, which--with only minor shifts in bureau functions--left the domains of the various bureaus untouched. With few exceptions this reluctance of bureaus to relinquish authority over their areas of "expertise" to more centralized control has continued to characterize USDA operations.

According to some observers, the programs and operation of USDA in 1969 heavily reflected government experiments and innovations of the 1930's, which proposed to solve the problems of poverty-related hunger and low farm profits due to overproduction with the same programs. The Department was organized, in practice if not in theory, around the various commodity subgovernments, the most powerful of which was cotton. As one observer of USDA operations explained:

Each commodity group has agents in each USDA agency to advocate its interests. Cotton, for example, is in a constant struggle against soybeans for shares of farm credit, the research budget, and extension assistance . . . While the commodities are as diverse as tobacco and oranges, their goals are all the same: higher prices, higher yields, and more subsidies whether as research benefits, price supports, or credit. The commodity network is nationwide, for each subgovernment has its own legions of vocal and often wrathful local farmers to support it in the states and on Capitol Hill.

As a department, USDA policies and practices have been slow to change. Perhaps one reason for this has been the long service life of many of its personnel. According to one critic, the typical employee of USDA in 1969 had been there "a long, long time":

He may have come in with Henry Wallace or he may have been a dirt farmer who was down and out during the Depression, got a government job measuring acreage which he owed to a congressman's patronage and finally was promoted to Washington in his fifties. . . . He is almost certainly white, probably Southern, often prejudiced, and still romantically attached to the myths of rugged individualism and the Jeffersonian agrarian ideal. Moreover, more than any other department except the Post Office, USDA is honeycombed with rotten boroughs of congressional patronage, a legacy of the New Deal when USDA became the employer of the last resort for thousands of displaced farmers with good connections. Congressional patronage control has reached its ultimate in the critical cotton subsidy program, for cotton subsidy administrators can, by law, be juggled without regard for civil service regulations. For these reasons, the average USDA official is naturally inclined to accept the values of the farm committees.

Even the officials of USDA who do not meet this stereotype when they are hired are molded and shaped to fit its image once they are on the job. The major homogenizing force is the norms of public service accepted in the Department. In the struggle of farm politics, USDA bureaucrats are typically men in the middle. They see their roles as arbitrators between competing interests, not as seekers after an abstract public interest. For the most part they passively respond to pressures but do not generate them. A major weakness of the Department is that for a long time all of the pressures have been on the side of the large producers. To a large extent, the USDA bureaucrat is insensitive to the needs of the rural poor because there is no organized group to advocate their interests day by day in the Department. Theoretically the consumers of food subsidies should have as much to say about administrative discretion in USDA as do recipients of cotton subsidies. But while the peanut crop, for example, has four different lobbies corresponding to four different peanut types, there has never been a permanent lobby to advocate the interests of the hungry poor.

By the late sixties, USDA was a bureaucratic colossus, employing 100,000 people to serve the nation's six million farmers. The Department's agencies function semi-independently: each has its own clientele, congressional allies, and supporting lobbies. In the judgment of one analyst, "[f]requently the Secretary lacks the grass roots support and congressional muscle of his subordinates." In other words, the Department was organized on the "holding company" model, and "[t]he Secretary of Agriculture rule[d] this domain as a medieval monarch ruled his scattered fiefdoms, which it to say, at a distance if not out of sight."

This was especially true for Orville Freeman, Secretary of Agriculture from 1961 to 1969. Former liberal Governor of Minnesota and a member of the state's Democratic-Farmer-Labor party, Freeman had established a record as "an unusually vigorous and competent administrator" who had brought blacks into the highest Departmental councils, increased the variety and quantity of food distributed under the commodity distribution program, and ended USDA's opposition to food stamps in 1964.

However, there were limits to how far Freeman would go. Both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson wanted a Secretary of Agriculture who would keep the Department from becoming yet another trouble spot, and for Freeman this meant maintaining the good will of Mississippi Congressman Jamie Whitten, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, and other Southerners on Capitol Hill who controlled USDA's purse and programs. Freeman felt that this good will was essential if he was to have any hope of continuing his liberalizing reforms, but this position made it difficult for him to react forcefully to the revelations of widespread malnutrition in Whitten's home district and elsewhere.\* Thus, instead of attempting to use the "hunger lobby" as

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\*As one observer recounts, "even when he made an effort to show his concern, as on his trips to the Mississippi in 1968, he failed to (continued on next page)



a lever to pry further reforms from the Congressional committees, he reacted defensively, refusing to "yield to pressure" by introducing emergency food programs, further increasing the quantity and variety of directly distributed foodstuffs, and lowering the price of food stamps--all of which were within his statutory discretion.

Moreover, Freeman tended to rely on his own department's studies of the problem of poverty-related hunger, rather than on the more sensational but less pro-agribusiness findings of Senators Kennedy and Clark and the Select Committee of Senator George McGovern. Unfortunately, USDA studies tended to emphasize progress in enhancing American agricultural productivity at the expense of analyzing the rural unemployment, poverty, and hunger that attended that progress.

Given Secretary Freeman's posture, USDA's generally balkanized structure, and the fact that federal food assistance programs were largely administered by state and local governments, it is not surprising that actors outside USDA played a major role in the formulation and implementation of federal food aid policy. The next three sections will survey three of these actors: the agricultural industry, state and local governments, and the congressional farm committees.

### The Agricultural Industry

It is apparent that the various food aid programs were designed not to provide food for the hungry so much as income support for the farmer. The programs were instituted in the 1930's when 25.3% of the population was still engaged in farming; price supports and the other programs could thus be justified as measures to save a large element of the population from very real distress.

But by 1966, when less than 6% of the population farmed, the face of the agricultural industry had changed. Mechanization, tax incentives, and price supports themselves had all combined to transform American farming from a labor-intensive enterprise carried on by numerous small and medium-sized family farms to a capital-intensive "agribusiness" undertaken by ever larger producers and often integrated with food processing and distribution. Between 1945 and 1970, the size of the average farm increased from 191 acres to 377 acres, and the national investment in farm machinery went from \$3 billion to \$30 billion; the use of fertilizer was up from 9 million tons to 37 million, and farm output per man hour increased 244%. Agriculture had become a big business, with \$297.9 billion in assets and annual realized gross income of \$51.1 billion.<sup>17</sup>

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(continued from previous page)

convey the sense of urgency and outrage which the situation demanded. On one occasion, he spent a morning in Mississippi visiting victims of malnutrition in "shotgun shacks" in the Delta, then returned to Jackson for a segregated dinner with Mississippi politicians, and finally found relaxation in quail hunting on the Eastland plantation. From a committee standpoint, he was practicing good consensus politics, but to liberal observers and the rural poor, his action seemed callous and expedient in the extreme."

However, the economic gains produced by these changes were not distributed evenly among America's farmers. In 1966, farms producing over \$20,000 worth of crops accounted for 68% of total American agricultural production; those producing \$10,000 to \$19,999 contributed another 17% of total production. Thus, 85% of America's agricultural output was produced by one million farms--at a time when the nation still counted 3,257,000 farms. In other words, two-thirds of America's farms earned less than \$10,000 gross income per year. In 1969, when the same pattern obtained, 1.3 million farms grossed less than \$2,500 per year--at a time when 129,000 of America's farms were receiving one-third of all farm income support payments.<sup>18</sup>

In short, by the sixties, American agriculture was divided into two camps: a relatively small number of large farms that received the lion's share of government subsidies and market income, and a relatively large number of small farmers who were so poor they could not even afford a poverty-level diet. What did this state of affairs mean for the small farmers and the localities they inhabited?

### Local Government in the Rural South<sup>19</sup>

Although poverty-related hunger is by no means confined to rural Southern blacks, in the late sixties their plight came to epitomize the problem of hunger in America. Consider, for example, statistics on Mississippi reported by the United States Civil Rights Commission:

In 1960, 7.6% of non-whites 25 years and over had a high school education. 2% had graduated from college. 70% had not completed elementary school. Of black 18 year olds examined for military service, 87.1% were rejected for either physical or mental reasons. The infant mortality rate for Mississippi blacks was nearly 5 times the national average. In two counties, the rate for rural blacks was 100 per thousand births. In 1966, the median income for rural blacks was under \$1500 and falling. The Department of Agriculture estimates that it takes about \$1400 (at 1969 prices) to feed a family of four a minimally adequate diet.

Reflecting these conditions--which were closely mirrored in the rest of the Deep South--nearly 1,000,000 Southern blacks left the South between 1957 and 1967, mostly for the large Northern ghettos.

It is apparent from the dates that this large exodus was not part of the Negro's fabled World War II northward migration in search of defense-related jobs. What had in fact happened is that mechanization and concentration had come to Southern agriculture. Where once forty workers had picked cotton in each field on a "sharecropper" basis, now two men operated cotton pickers for wages. Falling farm prices in the fifties, generated by huge agricultural surpluses, had forced farmers to cut costs or go under; the application of minimum wage laws to agricultural workers added to the pressures for mechanization and for the large farms that could both afford machinery and utilize it effectively.

One of these pressures was the very production control system supposedly

designed to keep farm prices down, thereby protecting the small farmer. What in fact happened was that well-to-do white farmers controlled the county farm committees\* which determined who received what acreage allotments and subsidies. (Elected under USDA supervision by local farmers, these committees are in many agricultural areas of the country more important in the lives of the people than the traditional units of local government.) Not surprisingly, large farmers received large acreage allotments; by agreeing not to plant these acres, they reaped large subsidy checks (\$100 or \$200 per acre). In contrast, small (black) farmers found their allotments cut to the point where they simply could not survive. Thus, in the home district of Mississippi Congressman Jamie Whitten, chairman of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee:

less than 100 cotton farmers with average incomes of \$25,000 a year or more receive 2 1/2 times as much federal subsidy as 1,000 black farmers with an average annual income of \$1,000 a year or less. The white farmers receive their subsidy for not growing food; the black farmers, living on the same land, receive their subsidy because they do not have enough food to eat.

What happened to small black sharecroppers who could not make a go of farming? At one time, they were allowed to remain in their shacks, living off welfare, surplus food, and odd jobs, frequently supplemented by loans from their white landlords. But the minimum wage law priced their labor out of the market, and the tensions accompanying the civil rights movement (especially the voter registration drives) disrupted what remained of the old paternalistic system. Mass evictions were the result, reaching a high of 100,000 in 1967 and 1968. As one observer described it, "For months the flat [Mississippi] Delta landscape was dotted with spirals of smoke and flame as the shacks were bulldozed, burned and the empty plots planted with corn."

The relation of all this to food assistance policy was simply that poor blacks who had been squeezed off the land had only one source of food: the federal government programs administered by local (white) officials. But the blacks had a potential source of power, too: under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, they could vote. The stage was thus set in much of the South for what some observers described as a deliberate policy of starvation: force the blacks off the land and starve them out by denying food assistance on some pretext so that they would take the easy way out and migrate to the North--before they registered to vote. In recent years the rate of such migration has slowed, but the absolute numbers remain large, and the number of potential emigrants--i.e., of economically marginal blacks--has been estimated in the millions.

Where did these poor blacks go? As has been suggested, they moved to the large Northern cities where jobs were reputedly more plentiful and where food stamps and a variety of other social welfare services were apparently more

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\*Although blacks comprised about thirteen percent of Southern farmers in 1970, only two of the 4,150 county committeemen in the South were black.<sup>20</sup>

available. The problem of hunger, however, did not go away: some of its victims simply moved north.\*

### The Congressional Farm Committees

Since the food assistance and farm income maintenance programs described above were statutorily based, reform of these programs would require action by the Congressional farm committees. The key committees in this regard were the House and Senate Agriculture Committees and Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees. Exhibit 3 summarizes the membership of these committees in 1969: the predominance of senior Southerners is notable, with the key names being Whitten and Poage in the House and Eastland, Russell, Ellender and Holland in the Senate. Several of these men were themselves farmers and thus benefited directly from the system: Senator Eastland, for example, received \$157,930 in farm subsidies in 1967, a sum equal to two-thirds of all federal welfare and hunger relief aid in his county for that year. Even those such as Whitten who were not themselves farmers identified more with the interests of their rich white constituents than with the plight of poor, hungry blacks. And of course, legislation that benefited those rich farmers guaranteed support for the legislator responsible.

In their efforts to retain control over food aid in an increasingly urban Congress presumably more attuned to the needs of poor people, these men had several advantages. The seniority system was one; the positions held by the key legislators on non-farm committees were another. Thus, Whitten was a powerful figure on the Public Works appropriations subcommittee, while Stennis, Russell, Thurmond and Rivers were powers on the Armed Services Committees--and all of these committees were important sources of military contracts, "pork barrel" projects, and the like. Solidarity among the Deep South delegations was a third reason for their success, while the reluctance of Northern liberals to serve on the farm committees was a fourth. For example, Senators Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.) and Walter Mondale (D-Minn.) resigned from the Senate Agriculture Committee at the height of the 1968 rediscovery of hunger; Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.) was assigned to the House Agriculture Committee but refused to serve.

Of course, reformers also had some weapons in their armory, the principal one being a growing popular disapproval of subsidy programs that enrich a few large farmers at public expense. Thus, the revival of the food stamp program in 1964 resulted from an agreement by liberal legislators not to fight generous new subsidies for tobacco research and for cotton and wheat in exchange for the food stamp legislation. Nonetheless, it was apparent in 1969 that major changes in food assistance programs would require a determined mobilization of reform forces in Congress, the Administration, and the country as a whole. And while the debate continued, so did the hunger.

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\*Although thirty percent of the U.S. population live in rural areas, forty percent of the country's poor live in such areas.<sup>21</sup>

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### Further Reading

Nick Kotz, Let Them Eat Promises: The Politics of Hunger in America, 1969.

ORGANIZATION CHART-USDA

1969

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

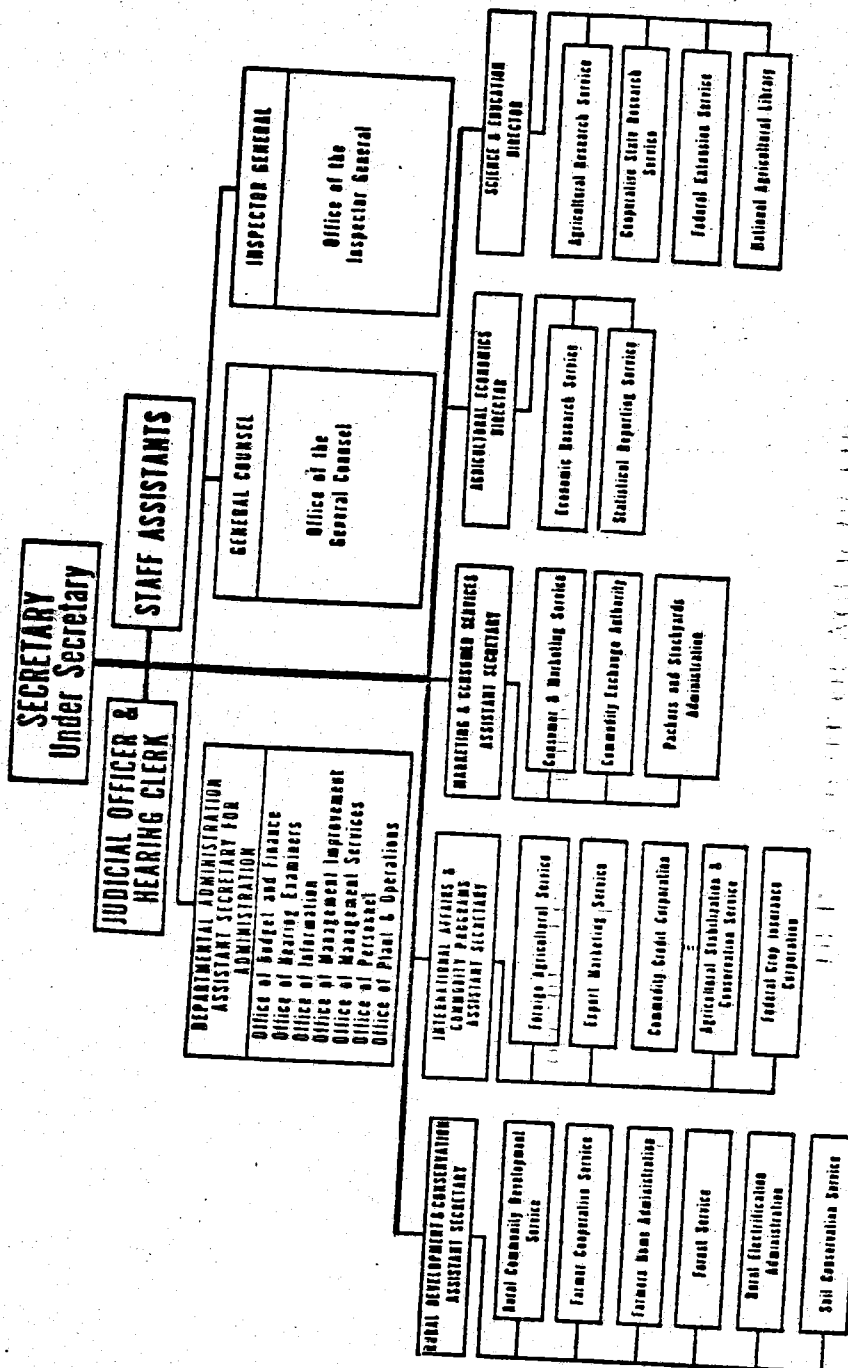


Exhibit 2

Federal Food Assistance Outlays\*

1965-1969\*\*

(millions of dollars)

<u>Program</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969***</u>
Commodity Distribution	529	326	304	423	522
School Lunch	130	141	150	160	204
Special Milk	97	97	99	102	101
Food Stamps	33	65	106	173	229
<b>Total</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>1,056</b>
As % of all USDA outlays	10.8%	10.6%	11.3%	11.7%	12.7%

\*Excluding School Breakfast and School Equipment programs.

\*\*Years ending June 30.

\*\*\*The figures for 1969 do not agree with those cited on pages 4-7 and 10, which derive from USDA and Select Committee sources; no explanation for the discrepancies has been found.

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States.

Exhibit 3

Membership of Congressional Farm Committees  
91st Congress, 1969

1. Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

<u>Senator</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Seniority (Rank)(1)</u>
Allen J. Ellender, Chairman	D	La.	2
Spessard L. Holland	D	Fla.	8
James O. Eastland (2)	D	Miss.	4
Herman E. Talmadge	D	Ga.	23
B. Everett Jordan (3)	D	N.C.	27
George S. McGovern	D	S.D.	37
James B. Allen	D	Ala.	53
George D. Aiken	R	Vt.	3
Milton R. Young	R	N.D.	7
Jack Miller	R	Iowa	32
Carl T. Curtis	R	Neb.	20
Marlow W. Cook	R	Ky.	50
Robert J. Dole	R	Kan.	53

2. Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Department of Agriculture and Related Agencies

<u>Senator</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Seniority (Rank)(1)</u>
Spessard L. Holland, Chairman	D	Fla.	8
Richard B. Russell (4)	D	Ga.	1
John C. Stennis (5)	D	Miss.	11
Gale W. McGee (6)	D	Wyo.	29
William Proxmire	D	Wis.	26
Ralph W. Yarborough (7)	D	Tex.	25
Robert C. Byrd	D	W.Va.	29
Allen J. Ellender (8)	D	La.	2
James O. Eastland (2) (8)	D	Miss.	4
Roman L. Hruska	R	Neb.	18
Milton R. Young	R	N.D.	18
Karl E. Mundt	R	S.D.	12
Hiram L. Fong	R	Hawaii	30
J. Caleb Boggs	R	Del.	32
George D. Aiken (8)	R	Vt.	3

(1) Rank-among all senators, based on length of continuous service. Because of ties (not shown), the lowest rank in the 91st Congress was 53rd.

(2) Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary

(3) Chairman, Senate Committee on Rules and Administration

(4) Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations

(5) Chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services

(6) Chairman, Senate Committee on Post Office and Civil Service

(7) Chairman, Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare

(8) Member ex officio

Exhibit 3 (continued)

3. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs

<u>Senator</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Seniority (Rank)(1)</u>
George S. McGovern, Chairman	D	S.D.	37
Allen J. Ellender	D	La.	2
Herman E. Talmadge	D	Ga.	23
Ralph W. Yarborough (7)	D	Tex.	25
Claiborne Pell	D	R.I.	32
Edward M. Kennedy	D	Mass.	36
Philip A. Hart	D	Mich.	29
Walter F. Mondale	D	Minn.	40
Marlow W. Cook	R	Ky.	50
Robert J. Dole	R	Kan.	53
Jacob K. Javits	R	N.Y.	24
Peter H. Dominick	R	Colo.	37
Charles H. Percy	R	Ill.	47

4. House Committee on Agriculture

<u>Representative</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Seniority (# Terms)(9)</u>
W. R. Poage, Chairman	D	Tex.	17
John L. McMillan, Vice Chairman(10)	D	S.C.	16
Thomas G. Abernethy	D	Miss.	14
Watkins M. Abbitt	D	Va.	12
Frank A. Stubblefield	D	Ky.	6
Graham Purcell	D	Tex.	5
Maston O'Neal	D	Ga.	3
Thomas A. Foley	D	Wash.	3
Eligio de la Garza	D	Tex.	3
Joseph P. Vigorito	D	Pa.	3
Walter B. Jones	D	N.C.	3
G. V. Montgomery	D	Miss.	2
B. F. Sisk	D	Calif.	8
Bill Alexander	D	Ark.	1
Bill D. Burlison	D	Mo.	1
Allard K. Lowenstein	D	N.Y.	1
John R. Rarick	D	La.	2
Jorge L. Cordova (11)	D	Puerto Rico	--
Page Belcher	R	Okla.	17
Charles M. Teague	R	Calif.	8
Catherine May	R	Wash.	6
William C. Wampler	R	Va.	3
George A. Goodling	R	Pa.	4
Clarence E. Miller	R	Ohio	2
Robert B. Mathias	R	Calif.	2

(9) Number of consecutive or non-consecutive terms of service; high was 24, and only 14 members had 15 or more terms. Another 62 had 10-14 terms.

(10) Chairman, House Committee on the District of Columbia

(11) Non-voting



Exhibit 3 (continued)

<u>Representative</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Seniority (# Terms)(9)</u>
Wiley Mayne	R	Iowa	2
John Zwach	R	Minn.	2
Thomas S. Kleppe	R	N.D.	2
Robert D. Price	R	Tex.	2
John T. Myers	R	Ind.	2
Keith G. Sebelius	R	Kan.	1
Martin B. McKneally	R	N.Y.	1
Wilmer D. Mizell	R	N.C.	1

5. House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture

<u>Representative</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Seniority (# Terms)(9)</u>
Jamie L. Whitten, Chairman	D	Miss.	15
William H. Natcher	D	Ky.	9
W. R. Hull, Jr.	D	Mo.	8
George E. Shipley	D	Ill.	6
Frank E. Evans	D	Colo.	3
George H. Mahon (8) (12)	D	Tex.	18
Olin Langen	R	Minn.	6
Robert H. Michel	R	Ill.	7
Jack Edwards	R	Ala.	3

## APPENDIX A

### Functions of the Consumer and Marketing Service, 1969

#### Marketing and Consumer Services

##### **Consumer and Marketing Service**

[For regulations codified under this heading, see Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, Chapters I, II, IX, X, XI, XVI; Title 9, Chapter III]

The Consumer and Marketing Service administers broad consumer food, consumer protection, marketing, regulatory, and related programs and activities of the Department, including assigned civil defense and defense mobilization activities. C&MS programs and activities are defined in the following paragraphs.

**MATCHING FUND PROGRAM.**—This program is designed to provide leadership, coordination, and consulting services to States in the development and execution of marketing service projects and provides for the review and approval of projects submitted by States.

**MARKET NEWS.**—This service provides current, unbiased information to producers, processors, distributors, and others to assist them in the orderly marketing and distribution of farm commodities. Information is collected and disseminated on supplies, demand, prices, movements, locations, quality, condition, and other market data on farm products in specific markets and marketing areas.

**STANDARDIZATION, INSPECTION, GRADING, AND CLASSING.**—United States standards for grades, such as U.S. No. 1, U.S. Choice, and U.S. Grade A, have been developed by this service for most of the important farm commodities. While the use of most

standards is permissive, their application for some commodities is mandatory, such as those for grain and cotton moving in interstate commerce on the basis of grade; for apples, pears, grapes, and plums destined for exports; for tobacco sold on designated markets; and for products stored on the basis of grades under authority of the U.S. Warehouse Act.

**CONSUMER PROTECTION.**—The Service also administers inspection programs to insure the wholesomeness of domestic, imported, and exported meat and poultry food products. Standards are established and labels are approved for meat and poultry products. Continuous supervision is exercised over further processing of meat and poultry products to assure wholesomeness and truthful labeling, and prevent adulteration or deceptive practices.

**FREIGHT RATE SERVICES.**—C&MS, acting for the Secretary of Agriculture, has the responsibility for obtaining fair and reasonable rates and essential services necessary to efficient transportation of agricultural commodities and farm supplies. C&MS is the direct representative in negotiations with carriers and in proceedings before Federal and State transportation regulatory bodies.

**MARKETING REGULATORY PROGRAMS.**—C&MS administers three general types of programs designed collectively to protect producers, handlers, and consumers of agricultural commodities from financial loss or injury resulting from careless, deceptive, or fraudulent marketing practices.

# Appendix A (continued)

ices; one regulates certain business practices of dealers in farm commodities; another insures truth in certain labels such as those affixed to seed packages; and a third covers the licensing, bonding, and examination of warehouses operating under the provisions of the U.S. Warehouse Act and administration of warehouses operating under storage agreements or contracts with CCC.

MARKETING AGREEMENTS AND ORDERS.—These programs, under authority of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, help to establish and maintain orderly marketing conditions for certain commodities and their products, such as milk, fruits, vegetables, tobacco, nuts, and hops. Milk order programs establish minimum prices that handlers or distributors are required to pay producers. Programs for other commodities are concerned primarily with regulating the flow to market of many highly perishable commodities. Through orderly marketing, adjusting the supply to demand, and avoiding unreasonable fluctuations during the marketing season, the income of producers is increased by normal market forces and consumer interests are protected through quality and quantity control.

SURPLUS REMOVAL, EXPORT, AND DEVERSION PROGRAMS.—Under section 22 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, C&MS makes payments to commercial exporters and others to encourage exports of surplus commodities, and makes payments to encourage diversion of surplus commodities from normal channels of trade to new markets and new uses. Funds obtained from customs receipts under section 32 are used to encourage consumers to make greater use of foods in plentiful supply, in distribution of surplus commodities to school lunch programs, and in making surplus foods available to institutions and to needy persons.

FOOD TRADES.—Under authority of section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, C&MS administers a cooperative effort to encourage the consumption of agricultural products that face marketing difficulties, seasonal or otherwise. Working through producer groups, trade associations, news media, and institutional feeding operations, this program calls attention to foods, particularly perishable items where the return to the producer is threatened by a supply that is larger than the market can readily absorb in the absence of special merchandising efforts.

COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM.—The U.S. Department of Agriculture makes available a variety of nutritious foods for donation to improve the diets of low-income families, usually with cooperating State and local governments paying the costs of program operations. In a number of counties in several States, the Office of Economic Opportunity or USDA contributes money to help meet these local costs. To meet the special nutritional needs of infants, preschool children, and women during and after pregnancy, USDA also offers supplemental foods to local health authorities through State governments. USDA donated foods also help feed children in school, summer camps, and child care centers and needy adults and children in charitable institutions as well as victims of floods and other natural disasters. Authority for the distribution program is contained in section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, as amended, section 416 of the Agricultural Act of 1919, as amended, and section 709 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM.—C&MS administers this program under the authority of the Food Stamp Act of 1964. Under an approved State plan of operation and through State welfare agencies, C&MS provides food assistance to needy persons. Participants

exchange the amount of money they normally spend for food for an allotment of food coupons of higher monetary value. The coupons are used to purchase food in any retail store which has been approved to accept and redeem food coupons by C&MS.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS.—C&MS administers several programs designed to improve the nutrition of children:

1. National School Lunch Program, under authority of the National School Lunch Act of 1946, provides financial assistance to public and nonprofit private schools of high school grade or under operating nonprofit school lunch programs. These funds are provided to schools on the basis of their need for assistance and the number of meals served. Federal funds must be matched on a three to one basis from sources within the States. Participating schools also receive foods bought specifically to help them meet meal standards and are eligible for foods acquired under price support and surplus removal programs of the USDA.

2. School Breakfast Program, under the authority of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, provides cash grants to State educational agencies to assist schools in operating nonprofit breakfast programs meeting established nutritional standards. First preference is given to schools in low-income areas and to schools where children attending travel long distances. Participating schools are also eligible for foods acquired under USDA producer programs.

3. Equipment Program to initiate or expand school food service, under the authority of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, is designed to assist the States through grants-in-aid to supply schools in low-income areas with equipment, other than land and buildings, for the storage, preparation, transportation, and serving of food to children. Applicant schools submit to the State

educational agency for review a justification of the need for assistance accompanied by a detailed description of the equipment to be acquired and the plans for its use in improving child nutrition in the school. At least one-fourth of the cost of equipment must be borne by State and local funds.

4. Special Milk Program for Children, established under the Agricultural Act of 1954, is designed to increase the consumption of fluid milk by children in nonprofit schools of high school grade and under. The program has been extended to include such nonprofit nursery schools, child-care centers, settlement houses, summer camps, and similar nonprofit institutions as are devoted to the care and training of children.

5. Special Food Service for Children is a 3-year pilot program, authorized by a 1968 amendment to the National School Lunch Act. This program extends Federal cash, food, and technical assistance to day-care centers, summer day camps, and other public and nonprofit private institutions to help them provide meals for children, usually from low-income areas, or from areas with many working mothers. Institutions are not eligible.

C&MS programs and activities in the field are carried out through a variety of different types of organizations reporting to their respective Washington components. Depending upon the program or activity they range from small individual local offices to relatively large area and district offices.

References

1. "The Food Gap: Poverty and Malnutrition in the United States." Interim Report, Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, United States Senate, August 1969, p. 3. Hereafter cited as "The Food Gap."
2. Source for all figures in the following discussion: "The Food Gap," pp. 18-20.
3. USDA 1965 Food Consumption Survey, cited in Nick Kotz, Let Them Eat Promises: The Politics of Hunger in America (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971), p. 244, Table 4.
4. "The Food Gap," p. 9.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
7. Ibid., p. 21.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., pp. 24-34.
10. Hunger, U.S.A.--A Report by the Citizens' Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States, (Washington: New Community Press, 1968), p. 9.
11. Department of Agriculture, Century of Service: The First 100 Years of the USDA, 1963, p. 143.
12. Wheat, cotton, field corn, hogs, rice, tobacco, milk and milk products were designated as basic commodities.
13. Twenty different commodities were on the blue stamp list at one time or another, although no more than 18 were listed in any one month.
14. U.S. Congress, Senate, Agriculture and Forestry Committee, Hearings, Processing of CCC Commodities, 84th Cong., 1st sess., May 15, 1955, pp. 33-34.
15. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Agriculture, Hearings, Food Stamp Plan--Disposal of Surplus Commodities, June 17, 1955, pp. 37-38.
16. This section draws heavily on Harrison Wellford, "USDA and the Politics of Hunger" and "Memorandum on Hunger," privately circulated memoranda unless otherwise noted, quotations in this section are from these sources. A native of North Carolina, Wellford wrote a book on Federal regulation of food and chemicals entitled Sowing the Wind while working for Ralph Nader. Wellford is currently (1977) Executive Director of the Office of Management and Budget in charge of the Carter Administration's government reorganization project.

References continued

17. Source for statistics in this paragraph: National Journal, January 3, 1970, p. 19.
18. Figures in this paragraph are taken from Harvard Business School case note 9-372-004, "The Politics and Economy of Hunger," 1971, p. 12.
19. This section and the following also draw heavily on Wellford, and unless otherwise noted, quotations in these sections are from that source.
20. National Journal, p. 19.
21. Ibid.