

In the case of wheat, an international commodity agreement was drawn up in 1948 but failed of ratification by several Governments. At this session of the FAO Conference the United States delegation announced that negotiations for concluding an agreement will be reopened early in 1949, and in a speech to the conference the President of the United States said that he would press for ratification by his Government.

(4) Another study of primary importance concerns the level of reserve stocks of basic commodities held by Governments. World reserves of food and feedstuffs are in general very low.

Larger stocks, particularly of cereals, will have to be accumulated in most countries in the near future. The present balance-of-payment difficulties in many importing countries will necessarily put the burden of financing these stocks more than ever on the shoulders of the producers and the Governments of exporting countries. Meanwhile, there is real danger, the Conference felt, that at current rates of increase the number of live-stock, especially pigs and poultry, may soon be larger than is justified by the supplies of coarse grains that will probably be available in 1949-50.

The Conference therefore drew the attention of Governments to the need for caution in utilizing the 1948 harvest, and it requested the FAO Council during the year 1949 to go into the whole question of stocks, including financing, in connection with its proposed review of commodity problems.

(5) The FAO Council was also requested at its first meeting in 1949 to review the question of continuing the international allocation of scarce commodities and to take such action as the circumstances may require. The Conference agreed that the time has not yet come to dissolve the International Emergency Food Committee but that each commodity committee that no longer serves a useful purpose should be promptly disbanded.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE FAO PROGRAMME OF WORK

The major recommendations outlined above are largely directed to determining more accurately than is now possible what needs to be and can be done about financing expanded agricultural production in underdeveloped countries and about expanding international trade. The studies to be made during the next few months are designed to lead to proposals for action on some of the world's most important economic problems. Meanwhile, by approving with little change the programme of work for 1949 submitted by the Director-General, the Conference ensured the continuance of the work already undertaken and planned by the Organization in agriculture, distribution, economics and statistics, fisheries, forestry, and forest products, nutrition, rural welfare, and information. This also includes the establishment of regional offices and further development of co-operative relationships with other international organizations, in particular the regional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

In considering the programme of work, the Conference laid down a number of general principles. For example, first priority should be given to projects that will increase production and result in more effective use of available supplies; projects that transcend national boundaries and involve co-operation on a regional or a world scale should