



Wide variety of agricultural investigations under way in Congress

OF THE 100 special investigations under way or scheduled by Congress this year, about 15% relate to various phases of agriculture. Unlike many of the inquiries which rated televised hearings and newspaper headlines, agricultural investigations were carried on with little fanfare.

Almost \$4 million has been allocated for Congressional investigations during the first session of the current (83rd) Congress. This includes \$1.8 million for the House and \$2.2 million for the Senate. There are indications that before the second session is completed, expenditures will exceed the \$5.7 million record of the 82nd Congress.

The House Agriculture Committee was granted \$50,000 early this year to carry out its investigations. This is the same amount granted during the 82nd Congress. However, during the 82nd Congress a select committee was established to investigate the use of chemicals in foods, fertilizers and cosmetics. This committee had \$75,000 at its disposal.

The Senate Agriculture Committee has a \$25,000 allotment for investigations carried out during the first session of the present Congress. This compares with \$60,000 spent by the committee during the two sessions of the 82nd Congress.

A list of the major investigations in the field of agriculture which have been proposed or are already under way appears in the table.

General Study Under Way By Health Committee

The House Agriculture Committee is utilizing the recess period to make an investigation of agricultural problems at the grass roots level. The long-range aspects are of particular concern. The committee has already visited many sections of the South, holding formal and informal hearings. It will move to the mid-West early in October for similar studies. In November the committee

will hold hearings in the Northwest and on the West Coast.

After Congress reconvenes in January, the committee is expected to schedule further hearings. A brief tour of the southwest states is on the agenda early next year.

Congressional Investigations of Agriculture

Farm prices and imports
 Dairy industry—price support
 Drought in Southwest
 Soil conservation and watersheds
 General agricultural studies
 Price support program
 Use of public grasslands
 Sugar programs of USDA
 Beef prices
 Winter peas—favoritism in selling
 Horticultural habits—Puerto Rico
 Canadian wheat imports
 Grain seizure regulations

The committee expects to gather sufficient ideas and information to help in consideration of such subjects as farm prices, effects of imports, and price support programs, particularly those in the dairy industry. These problems have already been considered to some extent in investigations already initiated.

After a hurried investigation of the plight of the drought-stricken southwestern farmers and stockmen, Congress acted quickly to provide aid. The final measure allowed use of the Federal Disaster Loan Fund to extend credit to farmers, cattlemen, and cattle feeders; special livestock loans above \$2500 for up to two years; and emergency assistance in furnishing feed and seed.

The need for close cooperation between federal and state governments and a stepped-up research program was emphasized in an investigation of soil conservation and productive use of water high up on watersheds. The House

Agriculture Committee may conduct further inquiries in this area.

Wheat Investigations

Early this year the Senate Agriculture Committee learned that some wheat imported from Canada as unfit for human consumption was being used for human consumption. An inquiry followed and has not yet been completed.

Testimony indicated that some 40 million bushels of frost-damaged wheat were imported from Canada. Some of this was milled to flour. The lower tariff classification for unfit wheat as compared to edible wheat represented a loss of revenue to the U. S. Government in cases where the wheat was used for human feeding.

An additional loss was suffered in that the amount of edible wheat which the Government was forced to buy from domestic producers under the price support program increased.

Testimony was also presented indicating that some of the damaged wheat was mixed with high-grade wheat and exported under the foreign aid program. Shipments took place from Houston and New Orleans.

In a report on this subject, the committee charged fraud and abuses in imports of more than 60 million bushels of damaged Canadian wheat. Criminal action was recommended in certain instances where the wheat was milled for human use.

In July the Senate granted \$15,000 to the committee to continue its probe of this matter. The committee plans to hold hearings in Minneapolis and New Orleans.

Another wheat investigation relates to the grain sanitation program of the Food and Drug Administration. In public hearings, it developed that some government spokesmen recommended postponement of seizure action provided in the insect sanitation regulations. Basis for this recommendation was that, until better storage facilities were developed, enforcement of the law would deter grain warehouse operators from accepting wheat for storage. Industry representatives also favored postponing action.

Several Investigations Pending

Four major investigations have been proposed but approval has not been given. One of these relates to a study of the Department of Agriculture's activities relating to sugar. Another concerns the continued high prices of beef to the consumer when prices to the producer are down. The others concern a general study of the government's farm price-support program and a study of the grasslands areas with the object of setting aside certain areas for research and other purposes.