
International

Oilseed production raised

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's mid-April projection for world oilseed production for the crop year ending in 1980 was 182 million tons, up about 1.7 million tons from the previous month's projection.

The increase reflected a larger forecast for Brazil's soybean harvest (where excellent weather during the weeks before harvest improved the outlook) and a higher estimate on peanut production in India.

Cottonseed production worldwide was revised up slightly to 20.82 million metric tons from 20.76, based primarily on increases in estimates for India and Argentina.

Sunflower seed production was estimated at 11.89 million metric tons in mid-April, compared to the 12.02 million metric ton estimate in mid-March. The decrease reflects revisions in production outside the major sunflower growing regions.

The rapeseed production estimate was revised upward to 10.71 million metric tons from the previous month's 10.68 million metric ton estimate, mainly because of expected higher production in Western and Eastern Europe. □

New Zealand removes butter subsidy

In 1973 when table (polyunsaturated) margarine was first manufactured for sale in New Zealand, it sold at 59¢ versus 44¢ for butter. Since then the price of both has increased but in March of this year with butter at 65¢ and margarine at around \$1.00, butter maintained its advantage (\$1 N.Z. equals 94¢ U.S.). These were normal prices, but both items were often priced lower in supermarkets as "specials." At the beginning of April, however, the government removed the subsidy on butter for local sale; the price rose to 79¢. Margarine already holds a good part of the market, partly because of improved packaging in plastic tubs, compared with a parchment wrapper for butter. The N.Z. Dairy Board is confident that sales of butter will increase, since in this country butter is sold at the lowest price in the world, but it will be interesting to see what happens. At the time of this correspondence margarine is being sold at prices from 79¢ upward.

If sales of butter do fall, there is a good export market for butterfat (anhydrous milk fat or A.M.F.). New facilities for making this product will be started this year by Aspak Industries, a consortium of dairy interests whose plant is located in Auckland. The company also will be processing vegetable oils both for margarine and for mixing with A.M.F. to give the blends required in some export markets.

There is also interest in other edible fats for the retail

market; all vegetable cooking margarines and shortenings are now available. The only edible oils produced in the country from locally grown seed are rape (colza) oil and a small amount of maize as a byproduct of the starch industry. Commercial scale trials at growing sunflowers failed because the bird problem could not be overcome. Nevertheless, there appears to be a great need to diversify our agriculture to include oilseed growing on a much larger scale.

The writer would be pleased to hear of any members of the AOCS who intend to visit New Zealand, and may be contacted at his home address, 6 Koraha Street., Remuera, Auckland, phone (09)503-727. □

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Australian oilseed production up

Australian oilseed production for the 1979-80 crop year is expected to total about 558,000 tons, compared to 534,000 tons the previous year, according to a report in AOF Oilseeds '80, the annual yearbook of the Australian Oilseeds Federation.

Rapeseed production is estimated at 45,700 tons compared to 20,500 the previous year, and accounts for most of the increase. The AOF article says the rise reflects favorable prices, use of disease-resistant seed and new low-erucic acid varieties, plus increasing acceptance of rapeseed meal and oil products.

There is a significant drop in safflower production, as the new crop is estimated at 40,400 tons, compared to 51,500 tons the previous year, resulting partially from dry conditions in key areas. Improved cotton varieties are triggering larger acreages, with cottonseed production estimated at 102,800 tons, compared to 86,500 the previous year. Other production forecasts, for soybeans, peanuts and sunflower, are within 5% of the previous year. Linseed production is forecast at 18,000 tons compared to 15,500 tons the previous year.

Production of edible oils and fats has risen from 165,000 tons in 1968-69 to 363,000 tons in 1978-79, the article said. Per capita consumption of table margarine has grown from 1.6 kilograms per year to 5.7 kilograms per year from 1972-73 to 1977-78, the report noted, whereas per capita consumption of total fat in butter, table margarine and other margarine has remained constant at 13.6 kilograms annually.

Growth in use of margarine apparently has stabilized around 2% annually, but larger increases in use of salad and cooking oils is anticipated. An anticipated change in regulations prohibiting use of rapeseed oil in margarine is expected to result in a decreased use of soy oil, the report said. □