

AMERICANS ARE EATING WELL

Thanks to Western Irrigation

RECLAMATION,

AND

AGRICULTURAL

SURPLUSES

Address by

The Honorable Wayne N. Aspinall

Member

U.S. House of Representatives

Palisade, Colorado

Chairman,

Interior and Insular Affairs Committee

(Reprinted from Congressional Record)

The Honorable Wayne N. Aspinall



**Chairman,
Interior and Insular
Affairs Committee
House of Representatives**

The Reclamation States and the entire Nation are very fortunate that Representative Wayne N. Aspinall has been Chairman of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives since the start of the 86th Congress in 1959. Before that he was Chairman of the Irrigation and Reclamation Subcommittee in the 84th and 85th Congresses. For almost ten years he has been the guiding force and principal spokesman in the Congress for the reclamation program. Chairman Aspinall has assumed this role not only because he is an outstanding authority on this subject but because he believes that the reclamation program has been and will continue to be a fundamental source of national strength. There is no one better qualified to speak and write about Reclamation.

Under Chairman Aspinall's guidance, since January 1955, reclamation projects totalling in cost over \$2.5 billion have been authorized and placed under construction. This is more than one and one-half times the combined cost of all projects authorized under Reclamation Law between 1902 and 1955. Even if the reclamation work initiated under Flood Control Acts is included, authorizations since 1955 constitute around 37 percent of the entire 62-year program.

Chairman Aspinall has spoken out many times before on all aspects of the Reclamation Program. In 1961, he made a major

address to the House of Representatives on the value of the program to the Nation as a permanent, long-term investment. He has during the last few years, made many speeches throughout the West on water resources development, and, in connection with the consideration of specific projects, he has pointed out again and again the tremendous contribution which this great program makes to the economic well-being of the entire Nation. Chairman Aspinall appears annually before the House Appropriations Committee to plead the case of Reclamation and the need for increased annual spending for this program that creates new wealth, broadens the tax base, and provides stabilized agricultural and food production.

Chairman Aspinall literally grew up on a reclamation project. He moved from Ohio to the Grand Valley project area in Colorado in 1904 when he was 8 years old. He has been a leader in his State and the Nation and in every body in which he has served. In the Colorado House of Representatives he was the Speaker, in the State Senate he was his party's floor leader, and in the Congress, as a member of the important Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, he is its Chairman.

"The crops grown on reclaimed irrigated land are not primarily crops that are seriously in surplus . . .

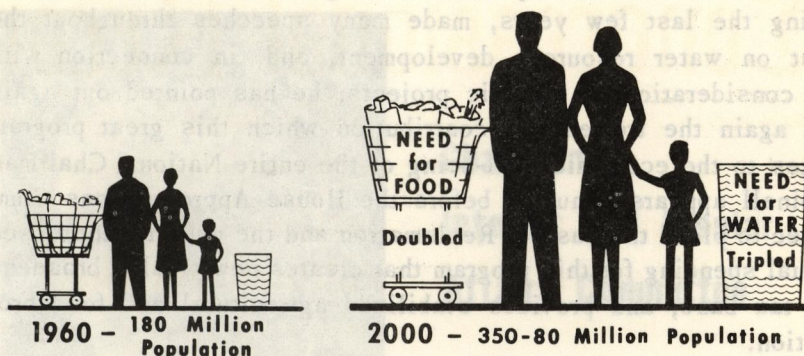
"It is unsound to suggest that the imbalances which exist in some crops could be corrected by squeezing off water resource developments in one section of the country."

**— Orville Freeman,
Secretary of Agriculture**

Reclamation Projects produce only an insignificant per cent of surplus crops as indicated by the following:

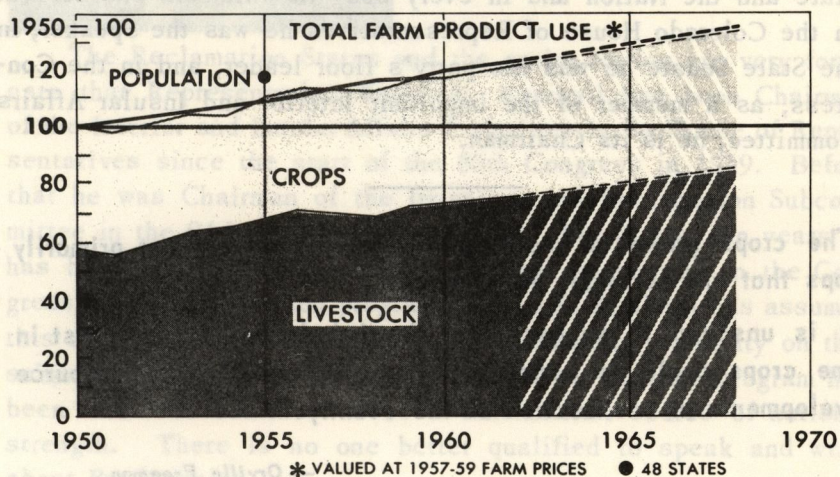
Cotton		5.4%
Feed Grains	Less than	1%
Soy Beans		None
Tobacco		None
Wheat		1/2%

A BALANCED RESOURCE BUDGET



OUR POPULATION WILL DOUBLE BY YEAR 2000

POPULATION, USE OF FARM PRODUCTS PARALLEL



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. 2382FI-63(10)

America's growing population vs. America's resources use is a budget which must be kept in balance. Water is the most important single resource we have — especially in the Western States.

If we are to meet the demands of our rapidly increasing population in the Western States, water must be made available through Reclamation to irrigate 8.7 more million acres, according to the Department of Agriculture. Such Reclamation projects will also provide water for power, recreation, urban, industrial and many other uses.

(Not printed at Government expense)

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 88th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Reclamation in Perspective—A Force for Progress and Agricultural Efficiency

SPEECH

OF

HON. WAYNE N. ASPINALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 26, 1964

Mr. ASPINALL. Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity today to straighten out the record on a matter which I know to be of interest and importance to every Member of this distinguished body and indeed to every citizen old enough to think and vote. The matter at issue deals with our agricultural abundance and a vague, though persistent, notion that somehow this current abundance of food and fiber will render unnecessary the continued orderly and prudent development of the Nation's water resources. I refer particularly to the sometimes-heard assertion that the reclamation program, as carried on in the arid and semiarid western half of our Nation, is responsible for the costly crop surpluses which characterize this national setting of abundance. I refer also to the companion proposition which asserts that the reclamation program should be halted or deferred, presumably until crop surpluses no longer exist.

In the harsh light of the facts confronting us, I find that these positions are neither tenable nor even plausible, and that those who espouse them will bring upon their heads the reproach of generations yet unborn. I say this, real-

izing full well that my esteemed colleagues and friends know me to be a man ever mindful of the taxpayers' hard-earned money and frugal in its disposition.

A SELF-SUPPORTING AND PROFITABLE INVESTMENT

To begin with, the multipurpose reclamation program carried on through the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation is the principal instrument through which the Federal Government, guided by the Congress, seeks to develop the water and related land resources of the arid and semiarid western lands. The dry West comprises more than one-half of our Nation's total land area. It is the most rapidly growing sector of our economy and ranks as the best and most important customer, client, branch office, and factory of the long-established business and industrial community of the Eastern States.

The continued well-being and growth of the West—and with it, the East—depends in large measure on the successful development and wise use of a single natural resource. That resource is water. To the dry West, water is a grossly maldistributed commodity in short and finite supply. Sometimes still viewed as a "free" resource in the Nation's more fortunate humid parts, water to the West is a basic economic good which requires and justifies large but profitable investments to render it fully productive in the service of our economy.

From the turn of the century, the reclamation program has invested in the future of the West and of America. In the lineup of public efforts to increase the Nation's stature on all fronts, the reclamation program occupies a separate and unique place. Its program is virtually self-supporting, because the beneficiaries of project services repay directly to the Treasury more than 90 cents of every dollar invested. I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will agree when I say that few endeavors in the public sector can make this claim.

Modern multipurpose reclamation projects embrace the range of beneficial uses of the water resource, and provide the optimum number of services consistent with present and anticipated future needs of the local areas, regions, and river basins. Among these services are the provision of needed water supplies to agricultural lands suitable for sustained irrigation; generation of low-cost hydroelectric power; conservation of water to fill domestic, municipal, and industrial needs; control of floods and prevention of flood damages; enhancement of recreation and fish and wildlife resources; prevention and abatement of water pollution; regulation of riverflow, and other services.

RECLAMATION CROPS ARE COMPETITIVE—NOT SURPLUS

The accomplishments of the reclamation program to date attest to its success as a potent force for progress on the national economic scene. On the agricultural front, we should remember, it is only through irrigation that many parts of the West can have any agriculture at all. Through water supplies stored and conserved by reclamation project facilities constructed or rehabilitated since 1902, western farmers may now irrigate about 8.6 million acres of highly productive agricultural lands.

It is this latter facet of multipurpose reclamation water resource development

which has led some to believe that crop production on reclamation projects was responsible for costly crop surpluses. Nothing could be more remote from the truth of the matter. A review of the most recent census data alone will dispel 99.9 percent of the argument. To put the matter in perspective, the 48-State U.S. acreage of cropland, pasture, and range in 1959 totaled 1.287 billion acres, of which only 33 million acres, or 2.6 percent, were irrigated. While the 17 Western States accounted for almost 93 percent of the acreage irrigated nationally, reclamation projects provided water to irrigate roughly one-fourth of these lands, or five-tenths of 1 percent of all irrigated and nonirrigated cropland and pasture reported for the Nation in 1959. With respect to cropland alone, the Department of Agriculture states that non-irrigated crops account for roughly 80 percent of the total value of crops produced in the United States. By simple deduction, these relationships imply that our irrigated lands produce about one-fifth of the total value of our crops on a much smaller fraction of our total cropland. To any straight-forward thinker this means that irrigable lands are really our most valuable and efficient lands, and that we should do all in our power to preserve them and add to them when and where possible to provide the needs of our growth.

In this context, Mr. Speaker, it seems curious that the reclamation program should be made to enter an arena which is dominated by the long shadows of other public endeavors. I have little doubt that the flood control program of the Corps of Engineers and the research, soil, and watershed programs of the Department of Agriculture enjoy all economic justifications claimed for them. But I am also convinced that their combined real and potential effects, as they relate to intermittent surplus crop production on the nationwide scale, are

larger by far than the effects attributable to the agricultural phase of the western reclamation effort. For the long run, to be sure, it is important that our national policies continue to stress the abundance of food and fiber as a necessity basic to the success of all other economic and social goals and that we view intermittent crop surpluses not as a dilemma but as a basis for optimism. For the present, however, it is equally important that we retain our perspective and do not single out for unwarranted criticism the reclamation program which makes every effort to achieve true multiple-purpose development, utilization and conservation of the West's limited water and related land resources.

IRRIGATION FARMING IS EFFICIENT AGRICULTURE

The Department of Agriculture tells us that we now have some 74 million acres of cropland in land capability classes IV through VIII. Lands in these capability classes are not suitable for cultivation or have severe limitations which render them very marginal at best. If we are to retire these lands from production—as we should because they are real or potential pockets of poverty and do not yield an adequate livelihood for those who still work them—we will need our good irrigable lands more than ever before. Moreover, in its projections to the year 1980, the Department of Agriculture prescribes that we need to irrigate 8.7 million acres of additional lands to accomplish such a goal. This is roughly equal to the total reclamation acreage developed in the past 60-odd years. The target date is fast approaching, so we must redouble our efforts to meet this goal.

We will need to carry forward our private and public irrigation programs for other reasons as well. These reasons go to the heart of our crop surplus problem. Nearly three-fourths of the cultivated lands from which crops are harvested are in feed grains, wheat, soybeans, and cot-

ton. These are the great interdependent crops where reductions in the acreage and output of one crop have shown up as excessive production and excessive carryovers or low prices for another crop. The root cause of this interdependence lies with the inflexible cropping patterns found exclusively on nonirrigated lands. These dry-farmed lands which cannot help but produce surpluses year after year, vary their production volume and respective proportional composition only in response to costly Government programs of price supports, commodity loans, and acreage restrictions.

It is precisely through irrigation of the semiarid and arid lands of the West that the inflexibilities of geography, climate, and soil are relieved. Irrigation offers an alternative to surplus crop production by offering the farmer an opportunity to grow high-value crops for the competitive market. In this fashion, the irrigated West has won its reputation as the highly efficient producer of an astonishing variety and range of the food, feed, and fiber needed to satisfy a large part of our wants and needs. In this fashion, also, more than 150 different types of crops are found to be grown on the lands which receive full or supplemental irrigation water supplies through reclamation project facilities.

RECLAMATION CROPS FOR HEALTHFUL NATIONAL DIET

Altogether too few people realize the important contribution which irrigated western crop production makes to a healthful year-round national diet. According to a recent Department of Agriculture study, the West grows all of the Nation's apricots, lemons, figs, walnuts, almonds, filberts, olives, and hops; 90 to 100 percent of the pears, prunes, and plums; and from 50 to 90 percent of the grapes, avocados, nectarines, cherries, and strawberries. In the vegetable line, the West grows from 50 to 100 percent of

the Nation's artichokes, garlic, cantaloup and honeydew melons, lettuce, celery and carrots.

Within this framework, the production of more than 150 different crops on reclamation project lands makes increasingly important contributions. In 1962 alone, the gross crop value of crops produced on lands receiving full or supplemental irrigation water supplies through reclamation project facilities was \$1.22 billion. More than one-half of this production, or \$626 million, was accounted for by vegetables, nursery and seed crops, fruits, nuts, and sugarbeets. Vegetables alone accounted for \$253 million, or one-fifth the value of total crop production, yielding \$575 per harvested acre, or better than 1½ times the national average. Trends are emerging to show that an increasingly larger share of reclamation-irrigated acreage is being devoted to these important crops.

By the same token, reclamation-produced wheat and feed grains accounted for less than 1 percent of U.S. carryover stocks in recent years. Because of geographic location, many projects cannot satisfy even the narrowly restricted local demand and, in fact, constitute markets for the surplus production of principal dry-farmed areas. Under assumptions purposely most unfavorable to reclamation, the 1962 reclamation cotton under loan support would account for no more than 5.4 percent of the 1962 U.S. cotton crop entering loan support channels. In all probability it is much less than that. A letter from the Administrator of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to the distinguished senior Senator from Mississippi, printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of March 3, 1964, points to the fact that: "historically, the amount of cotton acquired by the CCC from these areas is relatively small, the majority of this cotton moving freely in market channels." I would further point out that soybeans and tobacco, which

are the principal remaining crops presently in surplus, are not grown at all on reclamation projects.

In the face of these hard facts, Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight once more the principal tenet which underlies the reclamation program. I do so because this tenet in its real-life execution has done well by America, and merits the wholehearted, undivided, and continuing support of this Congress. The basic aim of Congress and the Reclamation Act goes to make western lands and water yield an adequate living for the optimum number of those who would put these resources to work. The rapid economic and population growth of the West in no small part attests to the degree to which individual enterprise has grasped the opportunities so presented. While the parallel forces of urbanization have now put a severe strain on the available western water resources, modern multipurpose reclamation projects rise to the occasion by creating stable, strong, and viable local and regional economies which pay their own way and contribute in large measure to the economic and social stability of our Nation.

ECONOMIC STABILITY AND PROGRESS

On the farm, reclamation projects provide adequate living for the optimum number of family farmers who choose to irrigate their fertile soils. In areas beset with declining employment opportunities, outmigration and a general flight to the city, irrigation farming has acted as the major stabilizing force. Research done by the University of Kansas, for example, showed that in a general setting of declining population in western Kansas in the decade 1950 to 1960, the expansion of farm irrigation and the more intensive agriculture in southwest Kansas was largely responsible for a net increase in the area's population. Numerous examples of the stabilizing influence of irrigated agricul-

ture could be cited for reclamation project areas from North Dakota to the Pacific coast. An article appearing in the Lincoln Journal of July 31, 1963, describes the North Platte Valley in Nebraska's wide-open panhandle, site of the North Platte reclamation project, as "a thriving area with rapidly increasing population, lush farms and plenty of agriculture-connected industry." Mr. Val Kuska, a longtime resident formerly serving as agricultural development agent for the Burlington Railroad, observes that "the remarkable growth of consumer markets in the valley is largely the result of irrigation. Sugar factories, creameries, packing plants and other food processing plants have flourished."

The same article quotes Glen Avery, chairman of the Scotts Bluff Chamber of Commerce:

Irrigation just naturally gears and sets up its own particular kind of economy. The main reason is because it is dependable. Farmers now are assured of a pretty steady income with the question mark of rain eliminated. Irrigation and ranching go hand in hand. There is much more fattening of livestock in the area now, resulting in the establishment of packing plants and additional jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that reclamation program accomplishments such as these are a potent force for stability and progress on our agricultural economic scene. Such accomplishments are not only far removed from raising the specter of crop surpluses, they actually serve to lessen the total burden borne by the taxpayer. As an example, the Garrison diversion unit in North Dakota, a project that is now before the Congress for consideration, when completed will actually result in taking land out of wheat and putting that land into more diversified farming and the growing of crops for which there is a strong demand. While no one in the Bureau of Reclamation to my knowledge has ever tried

to dictate to the nearly 130,000 project farmers and their families which crops they ought to grow, it is a tribute to free enterprise and the spirit of the individual, independent reclamation farmer for me to be able to say that these hard-working people prefer to grow crops which are destined for the competitive marketplace instead of a Government-financed warehouse or grain elevator. Given adequate water supplies and a choice, I would also say that all farmers in the dry West would prefer it this way.

SAVE OUR BEST FARMLANDS

But the choice is not there, unfortunately. In many parts of the West, our remaining developable water supplies grow shorter with the passing of each day. And each day, other uses will stake a claim on what remains. Already, the reclamation projects in operation provide needed municipal, domestic and industrial water supplies to more than 200 communities, industrial users, and large commercial enterprises for service to some 10 million water users in 14 States. In some sections of the West, the pressures to provide sufficient water to satisfy these rapidly growing municipal and industrial needs threaten to curtail seriously any further expansion of the agricultural sector.

In areas where urban pressures are most intense, large chunks of our most valuable irrigated cropland and orchard land continue to be lost to subdivisions, highways, airports, and other nonfarm uses. While cities and subdividers are very grateful to find that the water supplies originally developed for irrigation now make it possible for urban life to exist on these lands, I submit as a matter of commonsense, Mr. Speaker, that these developments are another important reason why the irrigation program must go forward for the good of the Nation. As our most valuable and diversified croplands are lost in this fashion,

lower quality croplands must fill the gap, requiring considerable capital investment to make them equally productive. This becomes especially important when we consider that American agriculture must have an efficient plant if it is to meet the demands of the next 40 years with little or no net increase in the total acreage farmed.

In that respect, also, continued irrigation development is bound inseparably to the working economic principle and law which states that land will move toward its most intensive, competitive use. While this law is operative in all sectors of the economy, its force is felt in the agricultural sector especially. For agricultural land in the West, and increasingly also for farmlands in many Eastern States, irrigation represents this most intensive, competitive use. The measure of its success shows up in two ways: First, irrigation farming supports the maximum number of people per unit of farmland; and second, irrigation farming affords the maximum number of people an adequate livelihood per unit of farmland.

RECLAMATION IS TRULY MULTIPURPOSE

Mr. Speaker, the evidence is incontrovertible. The diseconomy of crop surpluses is far removed from the sphere of reclamation's tasks. The irrigation phase of the reclamation program relies on sound economic principles and is accomplishing the economic and financial goals we have set for it. If we hesitate in giving our continued support to this program, we will not only be courting inefficiency, but we will also act against our own best interest, now and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, time does not permit me but to touch upon the many other constructive and important facets of reclamation's multipurpose water resource development program. Suffice it to say that low-cost hydroelectric power gen-

eration through reclamation project facilities benefits countless villages, towns, cities, and regions of rural and Main Street America; that reclamation facilities for prevention of property damage and loss of human lives from ravishing floods have paid for themselves over and over again; and that the enhancement of fish and wildlife and outdoor recreation resources on reclamation projects has been such that 27 million visitor-days of recreational use of reclamation facilities were recorded in 1962 alone.

It should also be remembered that reclamation project construction activities create jobs and income for workers and business throughout the Nation. Recent preliminary studies for a large concrete dam revealed that for each job opportunity created at the site of construction, at least an equal amount of work is required in the widely distributed areas, regions, and States from which the construction contractor buys the materials and equipment necessary for the job. For the specific facility analyzed, these materials and equipment were manufactured, assembled, and transported from 47 different States of the Union. Nor have I mentioned thus far that some \$300 to \$400 million of additional Federal income tax revenues are taken in by the Treasury each year as a result of the increased economic activity which stems from reclamation project areas.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this kind of record speaks for itself. I would add only that, dollar for dollar, the reclamation effort in multipurpose water resource development is a program for the present and a program for the future. It is a positive and prudent program, designed to yield maximum dividends on a national scale. Its stock is blue chip, protected and backed by more than 60 years of experience and an impressive array of lasting contributions to America's well-being.

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RECLAMATION IS TRUTH AND JUSTICE

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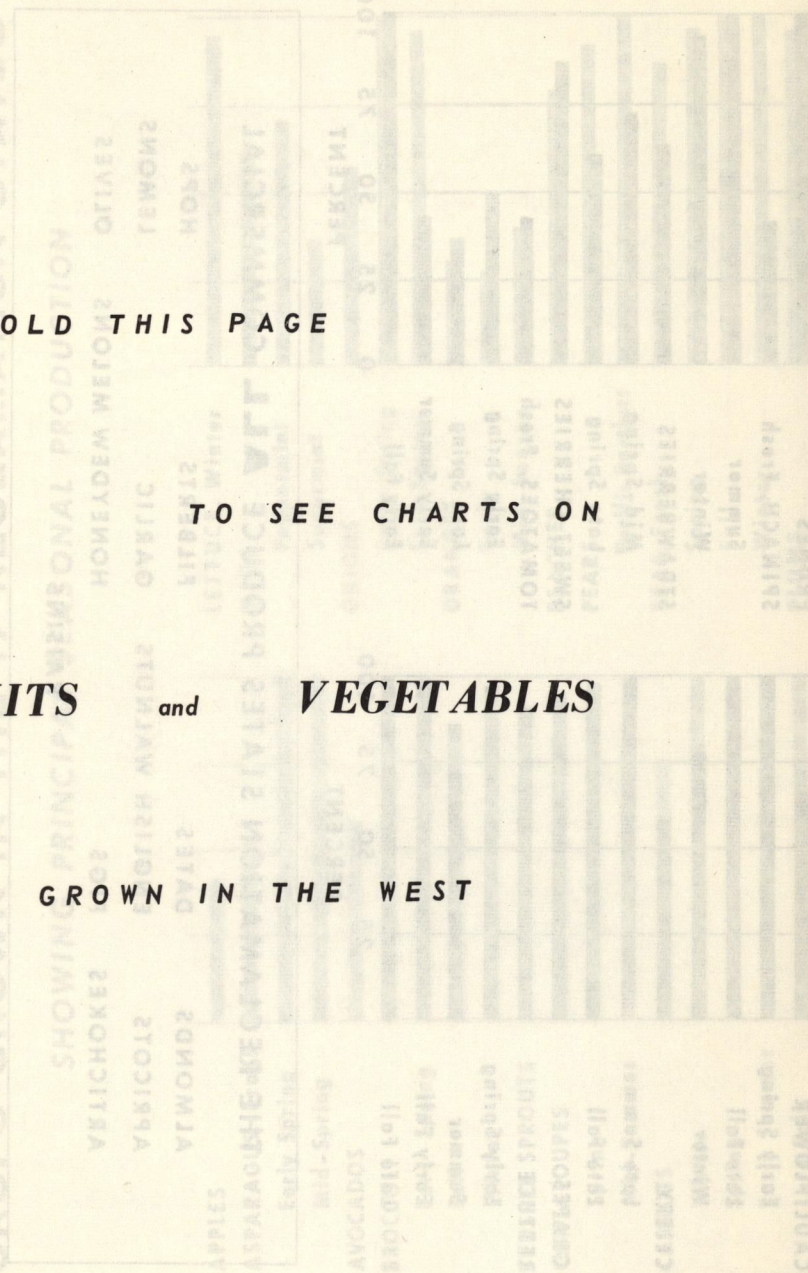
FRUITS

and

VEGETABLES

GROWN IN THE WEST

PROPORTION OF TOTAL PRODUCTION OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES GROWN IN THE WEST



UNFOLD THIS PAGE

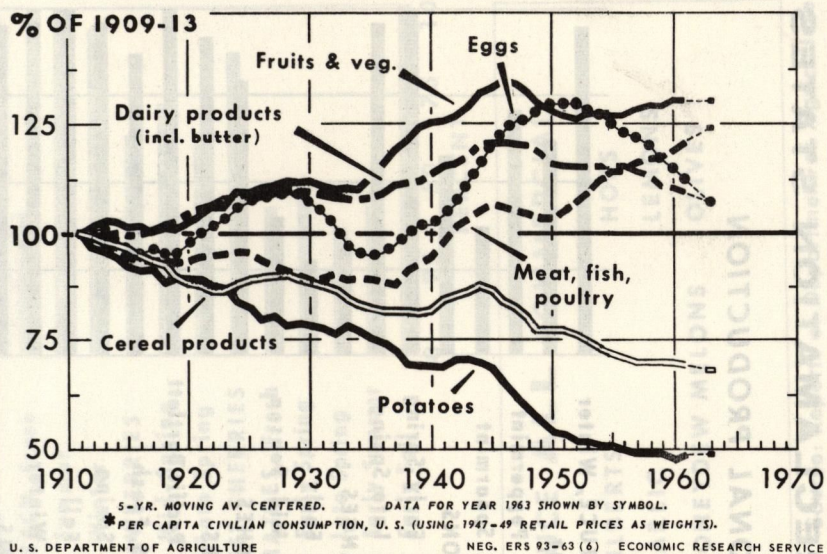
TO SEE CHARTS ON

Fruits and vegetables

Source: Reports of Department of Agriculture

73421

TRENDS IN OUR EATING HABITS*



The above USDA chart makes it clear that the American people are eating more meat, especially during the past decade, than ever before. Reclamation helps to meet the larger requirements of meat by providing a feed base for Western rangeland, thus enabling ranchers to grow the feed necessary to carry their herds of cattle or bands of sheep through the winter.

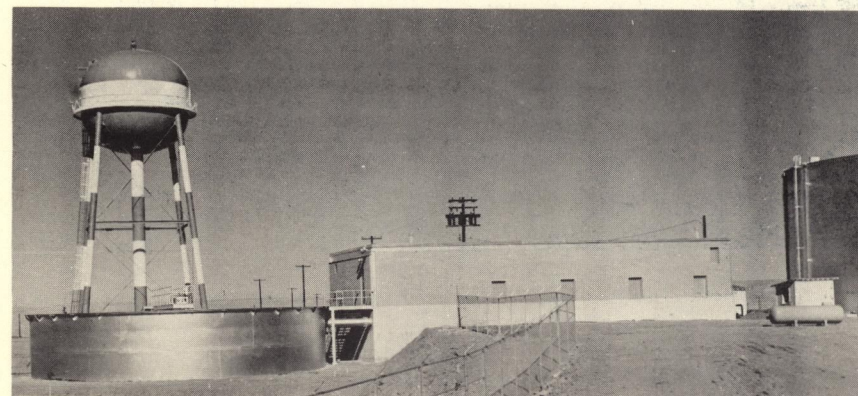
The above chart also shows that the American people are eating more fruits and vegetables, especially during the past decade, although consumption was high during the period of World War II.

The tabulation and charts on the preceding page show that the Reclamation West produces an almost unbelievably high percentage of the Nation's supply of fruits and vegetables. It is without doubt the irrigated West which makes it possible to meet the requirements of a diet-conscious people who are demanding more and more fruits and vegetables.

RECLAMATION CREATES



Prosperous Farm Homes and Communities



Water for Western Cities and Industries and



Recreation and Many Other Benefits

AMERICANS ARE EATING WELL

Thanks to Western irrigation, Americans are enjoying a healthful diet of fresh fruits and green vegetables the year around.



An irrigated field of lettuce on the Lewiston Orchard Reclamation Project, Idaho.

The West grows all of the Nation's lemons, apricots, figs, walnuts, almonds, filberts, olives, and hops; 90 to 100 per cent of the pears, prunes, and plums; and from 50 to 90 percent of the grapes, avocados, nectarines, cherries, and strawberries, and from 50 to 100 per cent of the artichokes, garlic, cantaloupes and honeydew melons, lettuce, celery and carrots.

*Agricultural Economic Report No. 33 Economic Research Service, U.S.D.A.
May 1963*

NATIONAL RECLAMATION ASSOCIATION

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