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COMMUNICATIONS

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Governor's Office
State of Oregon

WHEAT SALES

Channel 6 KOIN-TV 4/4/84 5:55

Judy Rooks

Oregon's first trade mission to the middle east did not return with the pad full of orders for Northwest white wheat.

Saudi Arabia is now growing its own variety, Syria will only buy on credit and is considered a bad risk by the Reagan administration.

Mike Donahue is here to tell us about an experimental project in Egypt which you say (mumble) bad news for soft white.

Mike Donahue

Northwest wheat growers will not be glad to hear this news, but U.S. tax payers will. To farmers it means the eventual loss of overseas sales, but to the tax payer it means a reduction in U.S. foreign aid to Egypt.

At Cairo University School of Agriculture, American engineers and Egyptian laborers are building a laboratory. One of five in Egypt that will experiment with cereal grains.

A team of international scientists will try to find the varieties best suited for this environment. Their goal, to double the crop and help Egypt feed itself.

A Portland firm won the contract to plan the project.

Vice President

So for the first time we are able to rely on contribution from a local firm to do a good job that we could put our name to it and we could be proud of it.

Mike Donahue

Already field hands are preparing the Ag School's soil to grow the experimental cereal grain, a farm environment must be created resembling the Nile River delta region, where the super crops will ultimately be planted and harvested.

(more)

WHEAT SALES, Channel 6, KOIN-TV, 4/4/84

Mike Donahue
(cont.)

The Egyptian government has tagged this cereal improvement project a priority and set a construction deadline of one year.

That kind official urgencies is unusual in this country but in this case there are two reasons to be quick about it.

Dr. Salah Said

The grain will feed the population and will enable us to be in a bit of an economic situation because grain is being more and more expensive every year to import from outside.

Mike Donahue

Dr. Said notes that his country's population is growing by 1 million a year. Bread is the dietary staple for his countrymen and most popular is the flat round pita-like product backed in quantity and sold at a penny a loaf.

Recently the government tried to raise the price to 2 pennies and immediatley had a national revolt on its hands.

Growing their own and feeding their own are matters of pride for the Egyptians who do not like to be dependent on U.S. aid for food on their plates.

Increasing the yield from local wheat, sorghum, barley and corn will restore some of that dignity and at the same time U.S. tax payers part of their annual \$2 billion contribution to Egypts economy.

Northwest growers however will still have a market for some time to come. Because it will take more than super seeds to make grain grow in Egypt. Its farmers also lack the necessary machinery and the education on how to use it.

That Cairo laboratory though Judy will be an important first step in self-sufficiency.

Judy Rooks

It is hard to argue against self-sufficiency as an idea but it is fair warning for our farmers.