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Mexico: Notes On Grain Imports

by John Neagle
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On Oct. 26, the Secretariat of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources (SARH) reported that Mexico will import some 25 million tons of corn within the next five years. Annual domestic corn production has stagnated at 12 million tons for the past four years, and the current harvest, said the Secretariat, is expected to be one of the worst in the past decade. According to agricultural specialists cited by the SARH, this year's dismal harvest projection cannot be attributed exclusively to the weather, since adverse market conditions, and low guaranteed minimum prices have also played an important role. At present, Mexican farmers are guaranteed $142 per ton. Approximately 70% of all corn growers, said SARH, have been unable to cover production costs and are in debt to the state-run National Rural Credit Bank (BANRURAL). Farm organizations insist that the minimum price must be raised to at least $200 per ton. On Nov. 1, SARH estimated that 1989 grain imports will total $4.5 billion. (Basic data from Notimex, 10/26/89; Xinhua, 11/01/89)

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