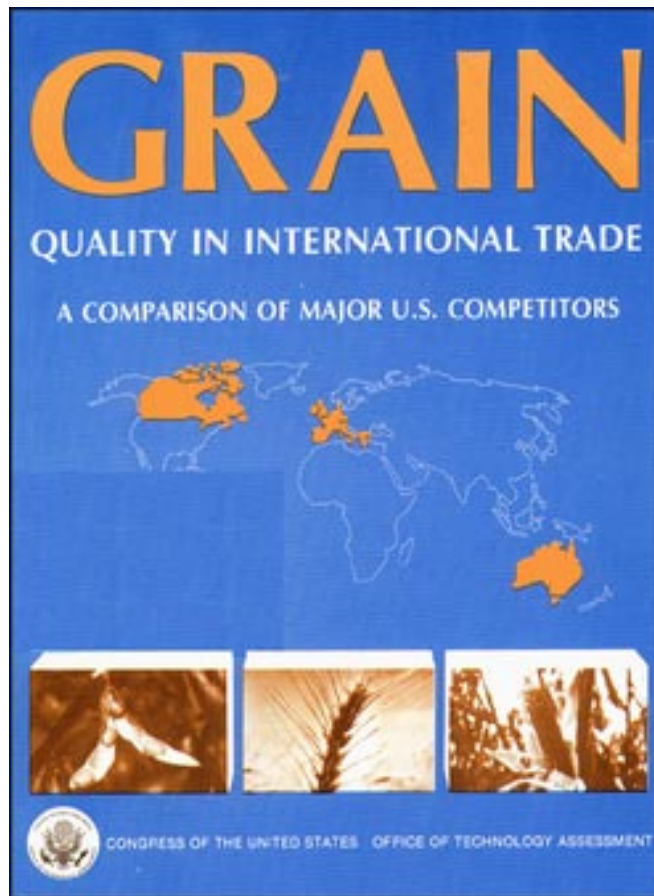


*Grain Quality in International Trade: A
Comparison of Major U.S. Competitors*

February 1989

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Foreword

This report is one of two that the Office of Technology Assessment completed in an assessment of the issues in grain quality for Congress. The first, *Enhancing the Quality of U.S. Grain in International Trade*, focuses on the U.S. grain system and possible changes within that system to enhance grain quality. To consider this issue fully, it is important to understand the grain systems of major competitors, a subject covered in this report.

The purpose of documenting these systems is twofold:

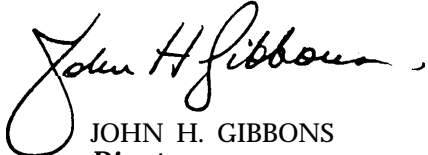
- to improve our understanding of the grain system of other countries as it relates to quality, and
- to consider adopting some aspects of others' systems.

The importance of the observed differences among countries lies in the influence that differing strategies have on incentives and the quality of the final product. Comparing the major technologies, institutions, and policies provided the background for a comparison and analysis of the quality of grain delivered to the international market,

Little published information is generally available about the grain systems of other countries—especially with regard to factors affecting quality. Canada is a major exception. To provide the documentation needed to analyze these systems, OTA sent study teams to Argentina, Brazil, France, and Australia—which along with Canada are the major grain exporters competing with the United States. The teams arrived in each country during the harvest in order to see the systems at work. Information was gathered in numerous interviews with producers, handlers, processors, exporters, grain inspectors, plant breeders, researchers, and government officials. The detailed reports written by members of the study teams form the basis of the chapters in this volume.

OTA greatly appreciated the assistance of the U.S. embassy in each country visited. The agricultural attachés were most helpful in suggesting specific individuals and organizations to interview, in developing an itinerary, and in providing background information for each team. OTA also wishes to thank all the people who agreed to spend time with each study team and provide information on their country's grain system. The teams were warmly received in each country and the people were gracious hosts.

Finally, OTA is grateful for the time and dedication of each team member. Many hours and days went into preparing for each country visit, and the 2 weeks spent in each country involved very long days. OTA is indebted to these individuals for the work they did to bring this report to fruition.


JOHN H. GIBBONS
Director

Advisory Panel
Grain Quality in International Trade:
A Comparison of Major U.S. Competitors

Donald E. Anderson
General Partner
The Andersons
Maumee, OH

Roger Asendorf
American Soybean Association
St. James, MN

G. (Jerry) W. Becker
Vice President and General Manager
Caldwell Manufacturing Co.
Kearney, NE

James B. Buchanan
Vice President and Manager of
Grain & Feed
Illinois Cereal Mills, Inc.
Paris, IL

William J. Cotter
Director of Operations
Port of Corpus Christi Authority
Corpus Christi, TX

James F. Frahm
Director of Planning
U.S. Wheat Associates
Washington, DC

Maurice A. Gordon
U.S. Feed Grains Council
Rantoul, IL

William W. Hay
Millers National Federation
Minneapolis, MN

Jerry P. Krueger
National Association of Wheat Growers
Warren, MN

Roald H. Lund
Dean, College of Agriculture
North Dakota State University
Fargo, ND

Richard L. McConnell
Director of Corn Research
Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.
Johnston, IA

Paul B. Mulhollem
Group President
World Oilseeds Group
Continental Grain Co.
New York, NY

Seiichi Nagao
General Manager
Cereal and Food Research Laboratory
Nisshin Flour Milling Co., Ltd.
Nihonbashi, Chuo-Ku
Tokyo 103, Japan

Grayce "Susie" Pepper
Purchasing and Office Manager
Zip Feed Mills, Inc.
Sioux Falls, SD

Harold E. Reese
Vice President and Assistant
Division Manager
Bunge Corp.
Destrehan, LA

Thomas C. Roberts
Executive Vice President
Wheat Quality Council
Manhattan, KS

Marion Stackhouse*
President
Indiana Farm Bureau
Indianapolis, IN

Ronald E. Swanson
National Corn Growers Association
Gait, IA

D. Leslie Tindal
Commissioner
South Carolina Department of Agriculture
Columbia, SC

*Deceased.

NOTE: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

OTA Project Staff
Grain Quality in International Trade:
A Comparison of Major U.S. Competitors

Roger C. Herdman, *Assistant Director, OTA
Health and Life Sciences Division*

Walter E. Parham, *Food and Renewable Resources Program Manager*

Michael J. Phillips, *Project Director*

David M. Orr, *Senior Analyst*

Lowell D. Hill, *Contractor*

William W. Wilson, *Contractor*

Linda Starke, *Editor*

Administrative and Support Staff

Sally Shafroth¹ and Nathaniel Lewis,² *Administrative Assistants*

Nellie Hammond, *Secretary*

Carolyn Swann, *Secretary*

*Through April 1987.

¹From May 1987.

The Country **Teams**

Argentina

Lowell D. Hill, University of Illinois
Thomas E. Weidner, The Andersons (Retired)
Robert A. Zortman, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Michael J. Phillips, Office of Technology Assessment
James G. McGrann, Texas A&M University (interpreter)

Brazil

Lowell D. Hill, University of Illinois
Thomas E. Weidner, The Andersons (Retired)
Robert A. Zortman, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mary J. Schultz, Michigan State University (interpreter)

France

William W. Wilson, North Dakota State University
Lowell D. Hill, University of Illinois
Robert A. Zortman, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Michael J. Phillips, Office of Technology Assessment
E. Wesley Peterson, Texas A&M University (interpreter)

Canada

Colin A. Carter, University of California, Davis
David M. Orr, Office of Technology Assessment
Robert A. Zortman, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Andrew Schmitz, University of California, Berkeley

Australia

William W. Wilson, North Dakota State University
David M. Orr, Office of Technology Assessment
Robert A. Zortman, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Michael J. Phillips, Office of Technology Assessment