

# CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	xi
HIGHLIGHTS, .....	xiii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION. ....	1
Background .....	1
Purpose .....	1
Scope .....	4
Methodology. ....	5
Options. ....	5
CHAPTER 2. EXISTING INFORMATION SYSTEMS, .....	7
Introduction .....	7
The USDA System: Deficiencies and Options for Improvement, ..	7
Responsibility for the System. ....	10
Collecting Foreign Agricultural Information ....	10
Assessing and Disseminating Information .....	14
Soviet Grain Purchases .....	17
Interagency Cooperation: Weather Data .....	18
Organizational Changes .....	23
Non-USDA Comments .....	25
Summary .....	25
Deficiencies .....	25
Deficiencies Due to Poor National System. ....	26
Deficiencies Due to Collecting Inadequate and/or Obsolete Data.	27
Deficiencies Due to Inadequate Analysis. , ,	28
Deficiencies Due to Organizational Structure .....	30
Suggested Improvements. ....	34
I. Improving the Accuracy and Timeliness of the U.S.	37
Food and Agriculture Information System .....	40
The Problems of Obsolescence .....	40
Options to Make the USDA Information	41
System More Accurate and Timely .....	42
II Integrating Nutrition Information .....	43
Difficulties of Obtaining Meaningful	43
Nutrition Status Information, .....	41
Nutrition and Food Consumption Surveys, , ..	42
Options for Integrating Nutrition Information .....	43
III Using Advanced Technologies. ..,	53
Tentative Conclusions About LACIE .....	55
Consensus and Conclusion .....	57
Options for Accelerating the Use of	57
Advanced Technology.. ..	57

CHAPTER 3. THE FAO SYSTEM: DEFICIENCIES AND OPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT.....	61
Status and Plans of FAO for Its Global Information and Early Warning System .....	63
Deficiencies.....	66
Suggested Improvements .....	68
CHAPTER 4. THE CAPACITY OF CONGRESS TO ANALYZE FOOD ISSUES .....	71
Introduction .....	71
Screening and Evaluation of Information for Congress.....	72
Improving the Capacity of Congress to Analyze Food Issues ,,,...	73
APPENDICES	
I    Individuals and Groups Assisting the Office of Technology Assessment in its Assessment of Food Information Systems .....	77
II   Witnesses, Technology Assessment Board Hearings on Food Information Systems.....	79
III  Twenty-Six Decision Centers .....	81
<b>IV.</b> Statement of Dr. Robert Nesheim, Chairman, Nutrition Panel of the Food Advisory Committee .....	83