The first scientific crop-sampling program carried out in the Bizonal Area by joint Allied-German agricultural field teams since the beginning of the occupation has forecast this year’s harvests of wheat, rye and potatoes as comparable favorably with the prewar yields in the same area of Germany. Moreover, because of the scientific methods used, the forecasts are more accurate than the conflicting estimates reported in the past three years.

Along with an increase in the acreage planted with major crops, favorable weather conditions and improved fertilizer supply, the checking teams and statisticians found that the bizonal grain harvest should total nearly 7,500,000 metric tons, close to the average of prewar years, and the potato crop approximately 20,000,000 tons, considerably better than the prewar average.

The new sampling method was developed by the Bipartite Food, Agriculture and Forestry Group, working in close conjunction with German bizonal and state food and agriculture authorities. Details of the project were originated by two US Department of Agriculture crop reporting specialists, Mr. Paul L. Koenig and Mr. Walter A. Hendricks, who came to Germany in May to develop a uniform, objective method for checking crop yields and production with German agriculture officials. The system as finally devised included some advanced techniques which had never before been applied to crop checking.

Obtaining accurate estimates of the major bizonal crops—wheat, rye and potatoes—has been an annual headache for MG agriculture officials. In past years German agriculture officials and Allied food teams have each submitted independent estimates of harvest prospects. The Allied teams thought the German estimates were too low and the German officials were underreporting crop yields. The German officials, on the other hand, said the Allied figures were too high. Since each used a different system for arriving at their respective estimates it was difficult to reach an agreed figure. A compromise figure, somewhere between the two extremes was usually adopted in the end.

The securing of accurate and agreed harvest estimates is one of the most important tasks of the Bipartite Food and Agriculture Group during the summer months, since food imports for the Bizonal Area are based on what the Germans can be expected, first, to produce for themselves. After complete figures are obtained on how much of each type of food the German economy can produce, the US/UK authorities make arrangements to import whatever additional foods are necessary to maintain the target food ration for the combined zones.

In developing plans for checking bizonal crop areas maximum integration of Allied and German officials into a common program has been sought. A working party composed of seven German state and bizonal representatives first collaborated with Mr. Koenig and Mr. Hendricks in developing a land-use check based on modern scientific sampling techniques, and later worked out together.

Grain Sampling in Schleswig-Holstein—(top to bottom) Placing meter-square measure in field. Cutting grain from measured area. Bagging heads of grain for laboratory tests. Threshing grain from sample field.

*) The Statistical Annex to the Military Governor’s Report No. 39 gave in its table of production of principal crops in the Bizonal Area for 1938, the following figures: Bread grains, 5,589,000 metric tons; potatoes, 17,462,000 metric tons.

Photographs by BICO Section
Furnished by BICO Section
a uniform system for checking crops—
rye, winter wheat and late potatoes.

The first of this series of land
and crop checks took place in
early June, when the joint inspection
teams began a bizonal-wide check on
the use German farmers were making
of their land. As in every year in the
past German farmers and officials
submit data in May on how much
land is being planted with various
types of crops. A post-check on the
accuracy of these land-utilization
figures is essential, however, since it
provides Military Government with
a clue as to how many acres of
grain have been planted, how
many of potatoes and how many of
other crops. Farmers, furthermore,
found it profitable to forget to report
an acre of potatoes here, another
there. These unreported potatoes usu-
ally ended up on the black market
or as food for pigs.

The statistical sampling plan jointly
developed called for taking a random
sample of 100 communities from each
of the six bizonal states in which
tests were conducted. A random selec-
tion of land parcels was drawn
from each of these communities and
actually checked for the exact area
devoted to each type of crop. When
this sample was expanded to total
figures for the 100 communities and
compared with the figures submitted
by farmers in the May land-use
census for these same 100 com-
munities, Allied and German statisti-
cians obtained a working basis, or
margin of error, by which overall
figures submitted for the Bizonal Area
could be adjusted.

This particular type of survey was
made especially difficult due to the
fact that the original records and
census maps of German land holdings
had, in some cases, been revised or
brought up to date since 1800. The
results obtained did, however, showed
a consistent trend on the part of
German farmers to underreport the
areas devoted to crops which were
subject to compulsory delivery, and
to overreport the planted areas of
uncontrolled crops.

Immediately following the science-
tific sampling of the Bizon’s
planted areas, the joint teams began
to check wheat and rye fields to
determine the actual yield per acre.
The same statistical methods were again
used. A large number of communities
were selected by mathematical
formula, and two fields from each com-
munity were picked.

From each field five one-square
meter (about 10.8 square foot) samples
of grain were cut, then threshed and
weighed in nearby laboratories. The
moisture content of the grain was
recorded, together with complete data
on weight and composition. As a
double check, about 10 percent of the
fields from which samples were taken
were completely cut, threshed and
weighed and the results compared
with estimates secured from the
square-meter tests. In this way a cor-
rective factor was obtained to cover
losses normally occurring during
threshing.

A special device was used for actu-
ally measuring the grain. This device,
a simple U-shaped iron instrument,
open at one end, encloses exactly
one square meter of grain plants
when it is laid on a field and the
open end closed. The grain heads
marked off in this measuring device
were cut and placed in a bag, which
was sent to a state agricultural re-
search institute for detailed analysis.
Use of this U-shaped instrument was
new in Germany, but it has been
used before on an experimental basis

Sample-Collections in Bizon—(top to
bottom) Inspecting sample field in
Bavaria. Collecting potatoes in Lower
Saxony. Digging potatoes in Wurtz-
temberg-Baden. Weighing potatoes in
Schleswig-Holstein.
in the United States, England and other countries.

The field work for estimating grain yields began the first week in July. For six weeks field teams, made up of one MG officer, one German agriculture official and representatives from the state agriculture ministry, the state statistical office and the local county administration each, checked two or more communities daily. At the end of the survey period they had checked samples of winter rye and wheat in more than 3,000 bizonal fields, scattered throughout six states. (Bremen and Hamburg were not included in the checks.)

No sooner was the grain check completed in mid-August than the teams began to check the harvest yield of the late potato crop. This, the third and last of the major land and crop surveys, continued through the end of September.

In the previous year checking teams driving through the bizonal country-side would simply stop and check any potato field which appeared representative of fields generally in that area. This year chance selection based on personal judgment was eliminated and the selection of the communities and counties sampled in each state determined by mathematical formula. In each of more than 1,700 fields selected five rows of potatoes were picked out and a 16-foot strip dug up in each of these rows. The potatoes in each strip were carefully counted, weighed and classified as to size.

These agricultural surveys are a continuous operation, lasting all summer, from early June until the first week in October and taking up the full time of 200 Allied and German inspectors. No single one of these three main surveys—land use, grain and potatoes—could provide the key to this year's production. Together they made possible one of the most accurate harvest forecasts in German history.

Maximization of bizonal agriculture is a basic MG policy. Unless the US and British people feel that the Germans are making every effort to increase their own food production, there will be little inclination to vote funds for the import of additional foodstuffs into Western Germany.

The 1947/48 agricultural plans called for a substantial increase in the planted acreage of major crops, coupled with a drive to intensify the per-acre cultivation of these essential crops. How well did this plan succeed? The scientific crop checks provide the answer.

Statistics compiled from data gathered by the checking teams reveal a significant increase in the area planted with major crops, place the grain harvest at almost 7,500,000 tons, and the potato crop at about 20,000,000 tons. This record harvest was made possible by exceptionally favorable weather conditions, a vastly improved fertilizer supply and the hard work of the German farmer.

So much interest has been aroused by the series of scientific field checks that the US Department of the Army in Washington allocated $15,000 for the filming of a documentary showing actual checking teams at work.

Shooting of the grain sampling operations was done by the Heidelberg Film Unit of the EUCOM Public Information Division, in the Heilbronn area between Stuttgart and Heidelberg. More than 1,000 persons took part in the production of this documentary—including the members of the British Inspectorate, US MG regional agricultural officers, German state officials, mayors and German farmers who made up the cast.

The film has been sent to the United States for final editing. The completed documentary will be first shown to members of the US Congress as an illustration of crop estimating methods under the Marshall Plan, then released in the United States, Great Britain and Germany.

Lubricating Oil Rations Ended

As the production of lubricating oils for 1948 will exceed consumption requirements, the Bipartisan Control Office approved the abolition of rationing of this product as of Oct. 1. German crude oil is especially adapted for refining into lubricants, and a small amount may be exported if the refinery capacity is expanded.

Decontrol of Property

There are approximately 14,000 properties under the control of Military Government, which are subject to release under the provision of the present decontrol program. Many large corporations and business firms have taken advantage of the decontrol provisions, while small holders have either ignored the program or have preferred to leave their property under MG custody because the costs of administration have been very low.

To speed the decontrol process, a directive has been sent to the state governments authorizing the charging of fees to cover the cost of administration by the German state property control agencies. Thus, the inducement to leave property under MG control because of the low cost of administration will be eliminated, while a strong incentive will be given to decontrol program.

Letters of explanation have been forwarded to all absentee owners of property in the US Zone to inform them of the new provisions.

Accounts of Cleared Persons

The procedures for the unblocking of accounts of persons previously subject to the Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism have been liberalized by the amendment of MG special State Central Bank Authorization No. 4. The State Central Banks in the US Zone are now empowered to unblock the accounts of permanent residents of the UK and French Zones who have been cleared in denazification court proceedings in accordance with Control Council directives.

Educational Film Experiment

The Augsburg Academy, an organization of adult education institutions in the Augsburg area of Bavaria, sponsored a Film Festival Week to determine the attitude of the public toward educational films. It is the first time that any adult education school in Germany has engaged in such a project. Adult education institutions in Bavaria formerly showed only strictly academic interests.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

NOVEMBER 30, 1948