

Import Causes Shortage

FAIRBANKS—Food shortages in the United States are not due to Americans eating more or producing less; food is short because we are exporting more, according to Dr. Robert W. Hiatt, president of the University of Alaska.

"To the agricultural industry, however, exporting food will be an ultimate advantage," he said, "because operations that were marginal before may now become profitable. This will lend to increased production in areas such as Alaska."

Hiatt spoke to members of the agricultural industry at the 1974 Farm Forum held in Fairbanks in March. The forum was coordinated by the university's Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service and other state and federal agencies.

Hiatt pointed out that estimates of tillable land in Alaska have recently been revised upward to 15 million acres. Using satellite photos and other modern techniques, it has been shown there are five million tillable acres in the Yukon River Valley as well as three million in the Tanana River Valley.

"There are an additional 10 million acres in the state that can be used as pasture for sheep, cattle, and possibly reindeer," said Hiatt. "We could produce \$1.4 billion in wheat in the Tanana Valley alone, which would be feed for 200 million pounds of beef or 474 million pounds of pork."

According to a survey by the university's Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Alaska's 320,000 residents consume approximately 40 million pounds of beef, pork and lamb annually.