AMONG the Chinese the traditional symbol of well-being and prosperity is a bowl heaped with rice with a pair of chopsticks beside it. Wishes for good harvest form the central theme of writings and greetings at the lunar New Year. Mencius, the chief exponent of Confucianism, left this indelible message to the Chinese more than 2,000 years ago: "For the people, nothing is more important than food."

This age-old concept of the supreme importance of food has a new impact today. Never before in history has population growth posed such a threat to mankind. Food sources are limited while the world is facing a population explosion with no apparent limit.

The need for more food has been most keenly felt in Taiwan, the island province of the Republic of China. Increased production, therefore, constitutes the main target and activity of agricultural development on the Island. In presenting a picture of the various farming activities on Taiwan, three main unique aspects must be mentioned first:

1. Agricultural progress on Taiwan has been made with the aid of the United States, which has been used with a high degree of discretion and ingenuity in ways different from the operation of American economic aid in other countries.

2. Farm production efforts have benefited the farmers directly because of the successful reform of the land tenancy system which has laid down a firm foundation for equitable distribution.

3. Taiwan's pattern of crop production has proved to be effective and adaptable to other tropical and subtropical countries.

LAND AND PEOPLE

Taiwan is short of arable land. About three-fourths of the land area of the Island consists of forest-capped mountains and hills. The main part of the arable land lies on the plain. From this much arable land, enough must be grown to feed a population of more than 11 million which is still "exploding" at the rate of 3.1% per

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2Commissioner of the American-Chinese Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, Taipei, Taiwan, and Eisenhower Fellow for 1962.