

considered the consequences of a complete shift to alternative agriculture. CAST estimated that the shift would reduce yields of most crops by 15-25 percent, partly because organic sources of nitrogen would be inadequate to support current yields and partly because of weed losses resulting from the ban on herbicides. CAST argues that to maintain production with a 15 to 25 percent yield reduction would require an increase in cropland of 18 to 33 percent if the land were of the same quality as land currently in production. If the additional land were of inferior quality, the increases in needed land would be greater than 18 and 33 percent.

Like Olson et al, CAST concluded that a wholesale shift to alternative agriculture would increase production costs, drive up supply prices, reduce amounts demanded, hence production, and make farmers as a group economically better off at the expense of the rest of American society, and perhaps also of foreigners. CAST also considered distributional effects among regions and farmers, and concluded that the corn, soybean, and cotton growing areas of the south and southeast would be relatively disadvantaged because organic systems for combatting the severe weed and insect problems in those regions would be less effective than in the midwest and other areas growing those crops. Regions having inadequate supplies of manure or where growing legumes is uneconomic, as in dryland wheat growing areas, also would be negatively affected. CAST also concluded that because the switch to alternative agriculture would require more cropland, erosion would increase. (But the amount of additional land would be less than the 18 to 33 percent previously noted because those numbers assumed maintenance of production at current levels. In fact, production would decline because of higher production costs and supply prices.)

Finally, land prices would rise, reflecting the increase in net farm income, and farm employment and wages would rise because of the relatively