



DISASTER  
RELIEF

CASE REPORT  
Chile—Drought  
Fiscal Year 1972

Agency for International Development  
Washington, D.C. 20523

## **CHILE**

### **Drought**

The central region of Chile has been suffering from a prolonged drought since 1968. The continuing lack of rainfall has had a profound effect on the nation's economy. The Ninth Report on Foreign Disaster Emergency Relief for FY 1969 (AID/FDRC) records 120,000 victims and economic losses of \$55 million. In FY 1972 an estimated 30,000 people were in need of emergency food assistance.

### **VALUE OF U.S.G. ASSISTANCE IN**

FY 1972 ..... \$862,000

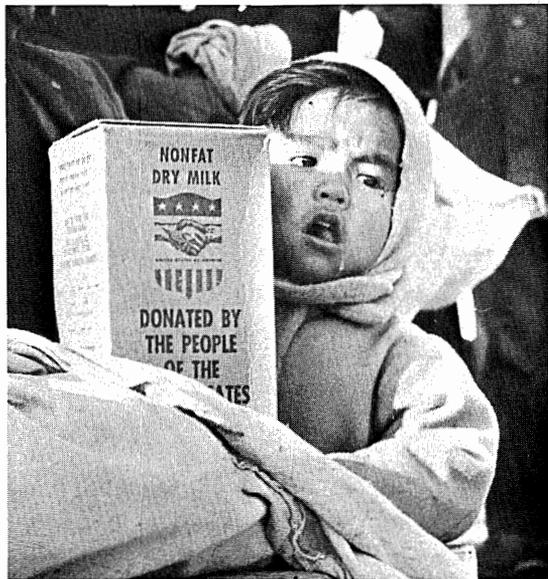
The cause of the drought has been attributed to unusual climatic conditions that have prevailed in Chile in recent years. According to records kept by the Meteorological Service of the Chilean Air Force, the year 1968 was the driest in 100 years. The rainfall in Santiago Province, Chile's leading agricultural producer, was 81 per cent below normal in 1967.

The lack of rainfall has had a serious effect on the entire nation. A reduction in agricultural production created a shortage of food. Thousands of cattle and sheep are reported

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*A small child clutches a box of powdered milk provided by the USG.*

to have perished due to insufficient feed. The lack of rainfall also greatly reduced the incomes of thousands of farmers and farm workers. The drought has been particularly severe in the rich, irrigated Central Valley, the source of most of the nation's food supply. Two-thirds of the nation's 9.2 million people also live in this region.

A side effect of the drought has been a reduction in the generation of electricity. Electric power has had to be rationed in both homes and industries, resulting in a reduction in copper production. Copper is the nation's chief export and reduced productivity in this industry has contributed to an already high rate of unemployment.

#### **ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE:**

President Eduardo Frei said in 1968 that the drought "is perhaps the major natural catastrophe which the country has suffered in its economic history."

The Government of Chile (GOC) has responded to the emergency by creating a national executive drought committee headed by the Minister of Interior. Food has been distributed to the needy and work projects started to provide employment.



*Chilean voluntary workers preparing food rations to be distributed to the needy.*

The GOC has sought to provide employment through development activities designed to strengthen the economic potential of the affected region. A multi-purpose project has been launched through voluntary community participation in the province of Coquimbo as an introduction to a broader social and economic development program for the whole region. The project included activities in the fields of agriculture, health, road construction, and community development.

#### **ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:**

The United States donated 2,577 metric tons of wheat flour, 191 metric tons of vegetable oil, 143 metric tons of CSM, and 286 metric tons of nonfat dry milk. The commodities were provided under Title II of PL 480. The commodity grant was valued at \$662,000. An additional \$200,000 was expended for ocean freight transportation, making the total value of the U.S.G. contribution . . . . . \$862,000

#### **ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

None reported.



SANTIAGO ★



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