

## The Limits of the Land

To appreciate how little agricultural land is available, visualize the world as an apple cut into four parts. Three-fourths of the apple represents oceans. Now imagine the quarter that is left – the land – cut in half to make two one-eighth sections. One represents areas such as deserts, swamps, polar regions, and mountains. If the remaining one-eighth piece is cut into four parts, three represent areas which are too rocky, too hot, too wet, or developed by man. Finally, peel the last small piece – one thirty-second of the world. This tiny bit of peel represents the soil on which we depend for food production.

But the world population is skyrocketing. It took from the beginning of time to 1950 to reach 2.5 billion people, and just 40 more years to reach a population of 5.2 billion. Today the earth's population is 6 billion people. By 2025, it is predicted that there will be 8.4 billion of us. Practices that cause excessive soil erosion or actions that would sharply cut agricultural productivity – such as banning pesticides and fertilizers – could bring disaster.

