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BRAZIL: THE ETHANOL REVOLUTION

VIDEO

SEVERINO CUTS CANE

ETHANOL PLANT

CANE CUTTERS

SEVERINO IN CANE FIELD

TADEU AT LABORATORY

AUDIO

NARRATION

49 Year-old Severino Ramos de Andrade works for Moema Mills- a large agribusiness company in Sao Paulo state, in south-eastern Brazil. From sugar-cane the company makes sugar and ethanol alcohol, which partially substitutes for gasoline in Brazil. Less gasoline means reducing the harmful pollution which is changing the world's climate. (22)

But despite his work Severino and hundreds of thousands of others may end up losing their jobs – ironically due to the success of their industry.(9)

SEVERINO: (Portuguese)

"I am getting old and I don't have an alternative... I hope to be able to find work elsewhere..." (7)

NARRATION

Tadeu Andrade is a director at the country's

leading scientific Research and Development Centre. (5.5)

ANDRADE: (Portuguese)

TADEU ANDRADE ON CAMERA

“No other country has so much technology related to sugar cane, from producing plant varieties, growing, cutting, transporting and all the industrial processes related to sugar and alcohol production.” (18)

NARRATION

ETHANOL PLANT

During the 1970s, Brazil’s economy was severally affected by an oil embargo and rising prices. The country’s military government launched a national programme to reduce its dependency on foreign oil. It encouraged the construction of ethanol plants, offering low-interest loans to sugar companies, and subsidies to keep the price of fuel low. (23)

CARS / CAR IS FUELLED

The automobile industry adapted quickly. The widespread use of ethanol has made the country a global leader in cutting emissions and oil imports at the same time. (11)

ETHANOL PLANT

Increases in world prices of oil, international tensions, and an urgent need to address environmental concerns, are fuelling the rapid

SUGARCANE FIELD

expansion of the international market for Brazilian bio-fuels. During the first six months of 2007, the country’s ethanol exports shot up by 70 percent. (19)

MECHANIZED CUTTING

This is the industry's future. Here at Moema Mills, 50 percent of the sugar cane harvest is already mechanized. The three workers that operate each of these machines can replace 60 cane cutters. (15)

SEVERINO ON CAMERA

SEVERINO: (Portuguese)

"The mechanization process is here, it has arrived. It's worrying for us. But cane cutters themselves are human machines. We are the beginning of the entire process..." (11)

FIELD BURNING

NARRATION

Mechanized cutting is also seen as better for the environment. Traditionally, manual harvesting of sugar cane is aided by burning which clears the plant's serrated leaves and tops. The burning is carefully controlled. But this wasn't always the case. (19)

DESTROYED RIVER FOREST

Fires themselves create pollution and uncontrolled blazes have led to the destruction of forests and wildlife. (7)

HARVESTING

State legislators have set a deadline for stopping this practice. By the year 2014 burning will no longer be permitted and almost all of Sao Paulo's sugar plantations will shift from manual to mechanized harvesting. This means cane cutters will no longer be needed. (17.5)

CANE BEING TRANSPORTED	There are no guarantees that jobs will found for each cutter, but there is awareness that mass unemployment could led to social chaos. (7)
PEREIRA WALKS	Ricardo Brito Pereira is Moema Mills' director.(3)
	<u>PEREIRA:</u> (Portuguese)
RICARDO BRITO PEREIRA ON CAMERA	“We need social stability, and we need to create employment... The cutters will be absorbed in our future expansion. This is our responsibility. It’s not only up to the government, the unions. We have to be involved.” (15)
	<u>NARRATION</u>
MORE INDUSTRIAL HARVEST	Brazil aims to double its current production of ethanol in 10 years. This might mean more need for farm machinery. Many believe that the conversion of ethanol into a tradable commodity worldwide – as oil is – is crucial for lifting the developing world out of poverty. (17.5)
MECHANIZED HARVEST	To balance environment concerns, technological development and the re-deployment of hundreds of thousands of cane cutters will be a major challenge for Brazilian society. (9)
UN LOGO	This report was produced by Chaim Litewski for the United Nations.