

# Wheat Import A Possibility For Spring

United Press International

The Agriculture Department yesterday predicted that U.S. wheat reserves will drop late this spring to their lowest point since 1947, increasing the probability that President Nixon will order imports from Canada as a hedge against shortages and soaring bread prices.

High department officials said they were confident there would be no bread shortage this spring.

The baking industry predicted recently that bread might cost as much as \$1 a loaf this spring unless the government curbs wheat exports, but Mr. Nixon said last weekend that these reports were "ridiculous."

Agriculture Department economists, in a revised forecast of supply and demand for major crops, also raised their estimates of 1974 wheat and corn production to record levels. Consequently, they said, reserve stocks of both grains will be rising after this year's harvests, with the prospect of greater supplies and potential relief from food inflation.

The latest forecast said that with exports approaching record levels in the current marketing season, reserve stocks of "old" wheat left on hand when the 1974 harvest arrives this summer are expected to be down to 182 million bushels, the lowest carryover since 1947. Previously the July 1 carryover had been officially estimated at 210 million bushels.