

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS : BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

People often assume that much of Britain apart from urban and military target areas, would largely escape the effects of nuclear attack, provided simple precautions were taken. **This is not borne out by scientific studies, using available published information.**

There are three main categories of effects on the rural environment:

### 1 PROMPT, DIRECT EFFECTS of single explosions

For a 1 Megaton explosion, the lethal area for humans and farm animals:

- \* for **blast** is the size of a **small market town**;
- \* for the **heat flash** from the fireball - the size of a **large city**;
- \* for **radiation** from fallout from a groundburst - 3 or 4 times larger still.

### 2 SHORT TERM AFTERMATH of a nuclear attack on Britain

For a 'realistic' attack comparable to the 'Square Leg' Home Defence Exercise (200 Megatons on about 100 targets), survival of people and farm stock **outside the targetted areas** would be threatened by:

- \* breakdown of **electricity supplies**;
- \* interruption and contamination of **water supplies**;
- \* collapse of **food supplies**;
- \* **contamination** of crops and farm animals.

### 3 GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES of nuclear war

For a 5,000 - 10,000 Megaton nuclear war (40%-80% of the nuclear arsenal of the USA and the USSR):

- \* **smoke from fires** drastically reducing sunlight and crop growth;
- \* **starvation**, especially in the Third World;
- \* **cancer and genetic changes** from global radioactive fallout and perhaps from ultraviolet rays;
- \* **disease and pests** thrive.