

Chamber of Commerce Adopts 5 Point Agriculture Program

A five point program has been adopted by the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce to strengthen the agricultural relations of the chamber and to give more emphasis to the business of farming.

The program, adopted as part of the current development program of the chamber will see the appointment of a committee on agriculture in the chamber and one or more of the committee members will attend meetings of the County Agricultural Council.

The Chamber will also consider the establishment of an annual L-F (business-farm) Day.

A legislative and public relations program to combat the littering of farm lands and rural highways will be sponsored by the Chamber.

Farmers and farm organizations will be encouraged to seek membership in the Chamber of Commerce.

And significant agricultural events will be reported in the membership bulletin of the Chamber.

This program of work, of which the agricultural program is a part, was adopted as a goal and guide for the next three to five years.

The program was adopted upon recommendations given by members of special task groups

which delved into various community and trade problems in which the Chamber is interested. The agricultural task group, composed of Lester Brubaker, 350 Strasburg Pike, John McGrann, Lancaster; Walter Dunlap Jr., Lancaster and Robert Best, Lancaster Farming editor, interviewed numerous farmers and farm leaders to find just what the farmer needed and wanted from the Chamber of Commerce.

The Harry Krusz and Co. public relations firm of Lincoln, Neb. is assisting the Chamber in the development program. This firm noted that agriculture is one of the greater industries of the Lancaster area and felt that a good constant farm program was needed by the Chamber.

The Chamber of Commerce serves as a clearing house for specific information on local industrial, commercial and agricultural activities, as well as historical and statistical data; it registers magazine solicitors and performs many of the "Better Business Bureau" functions in the area.

The chamber also participates in Sale Days promotions, in Christmas street decorations, and has a relay system of warnings on petty thieves, rubber check passers and the like.

Government Reveals Added Details Of 1959 Conservation Reserve

Additional details of the 1959 Conservation Reserve of the Soil Bank were announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wednesday as plans were being made for an early start on sign-up under the program late this summer and early fall.

Under present plans, the sign-up period will begin about Sept. 1, although definite opening dates will be set locally by State Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committees. It is expected series of regional meetings is being held with ASC and other interested Departmental field personnel to acquaint them with details of the 1959 program. On scheduled through Aug. 2 — the basis of these meetings — groundwork will be laid for making the program available to farmers through county ASC offices.

The Conservation Reserve is being opened early this year because the other phase of the Soil Bank — the Acreage Reserve — will not be in effect in 1959. MAJOR CHANGES in the 1959 Conservation Reserve from the program in effect for contracts beginning this year are:

1. An increase in the national average annual payment for Conservation Reserve land to \$13.50 per acre from the previous na-

tional average rate of \$10.

2. Additional incentives including a payment of 10 per cent above normal rates, for farmers to put all eligible land on their farms in the program for at least 5 years.

3. A priority system for accepting Conservation Reserve contract applications.

UNDER THE PRIORITY system, preference will be given farmers who had all their cropland in the Soil Bank in 1958 — the Conservation Reserve and the Acreage Reserve together — and are now offering to put into the Conservation Reserve the land that was in the Acreage Reserve. After this priority will be given farmers offering land at lowest rates compared with applicable maximum rates for their farms.

County ASC committees will establish a maximum annual payment rate per-acre for all land offered for the program and farmers will have the opportunity to offer their land at less than these "ceiling" rates. In cases where participation in the program might exhaust available funds in a county or more land is offered than it would be desirable to contract in one year, offers at lower-than-maximum rates would be more certain of acceptance.

In cases of applicants of equal

standing under this second priority, these further criteria will be applied — offers of lowest rate per acre, offers of total eligible acreage, offers of contracts for the longest period.

The rates of annual payments for individual farms, upon application of farmers, will be set by county ASC committees on the basis of average land on the farm, taking into consideration productivity, agricultural value, and rental rates for similar land in the locality. Individual farm rates may vary above and below the average annual payment rate established for the county. An upper limit of no more than 20 per cent of the value of the land on the individual farm is required by law.

The regular maximum payment rate may be earned by putting in the program land which during the past two years (1957 and 1958) has been in Soil Bank "base" crops (grains, oilseeds and row crops) or from which tame hay has been harvested for hay or silage during the same period and a corresponding reduction is made in Soil Bank base crops.

A lower rate of per-acre payment, 50 per cent of the regular maximum rate for the farm, may be earned by putting additional "non-diversion" land in the program. Non-diversion land does not require a corresponding reduction in Soil Bank "base" crops.

ON FARMS WITH a Soil Bank "base" of over 30 acres, for each acre put in the reserve at the

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