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Farm Labor Union Inevitable

Inevitability of an organized farm labor movement, corporation, Cornell University's chair-major force in commercial agriculture, and a continuing trend toward fewer but better managed farm units in the years directly ahead were predicted by speakers at the Agricultural Leaders' Forum held at Cornell University.

The views were presented by speakers who geared their talks to bring into sharp focus major trends, changes and forces affecting the agricultural industry during the 1970s and beyond at both the state and national levels.

The parley drew a capacity audience of more than 850 farm leaders and agribusiness representatives from throughout the state.

Frank L. Fernbach, special projects assistant to the president of United Steel Workers of

America, declared that the organization of farm labor is inevitable.

"Organization of farm labor should be viewed not only as a threat but should also be considered positively," he emphasized.

Unions, he said, are responsible for recruiting and supplying a labor force and can provide it when and where it is needed; the quality and skills of farm laborers will improve as wages improve; and unions assist with educational programs, sponsoring apprentices and providing man-power courses.

Stating that farm laborers are the stepchildren of American society, the labor expert stressed that all factors in agriculture deserve a fair return, from the farmer to the retailer.

"Labor is not disinterested in the farm's future," he pointed out. "Unions have supported legislation of benefit to farms and the quality of rural life. The Appalachian Act and the Rural Development Act were initiated by labor organizations."

"If all segments of agriculture are to get a fair return for their work, it will take organization and planning," he emphasized. "And we look to the farm leaders."

Another speaker at the parley warned that the U.S. Agriculture Department will be under attack for the next decade from politicians who want to cut it from cabinet.

F. Thomas Huhecy, editor-in-chief of "Farm Quarterly," Cincinnati, noted that urban congressmen have already called for the shifting of the inspection functions of the USDA to another agency and for the transfer of the welfare food program.

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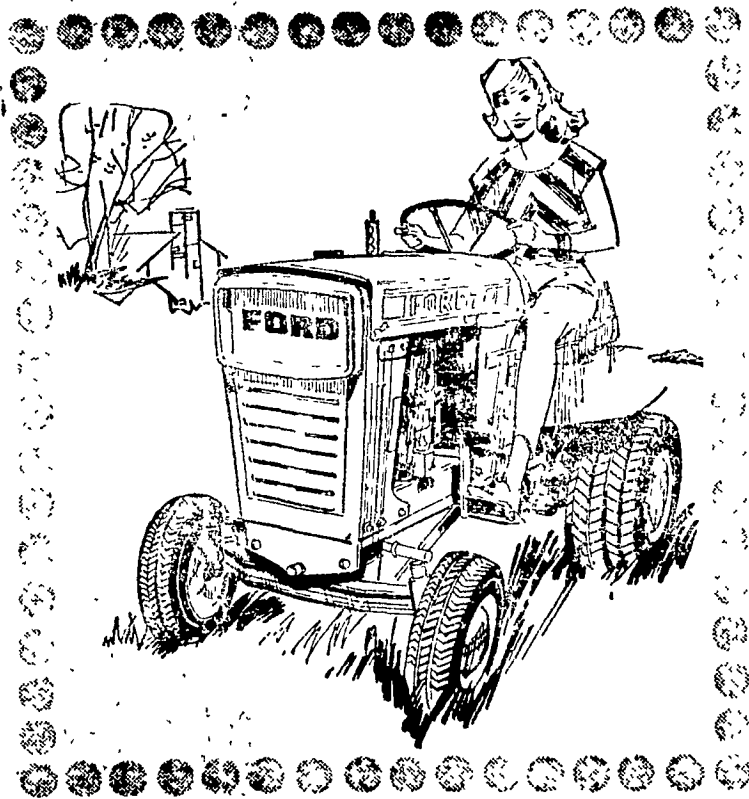
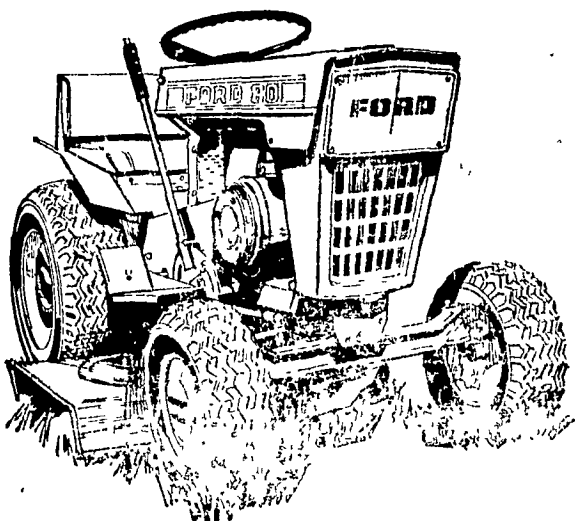
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