

Shuman Calls On Congress To Enact Ag Adjustment Act

Charles B. Shuman, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, the nation's largest general farm organization, this week called on Congress to enact what he called "a broad-based program to help individual farmers make needed adjustments, increase prices, expand markets, cut costs and thus provide the basis for increased net farm income."

In a statement prepared for presentation at a House Agriculture Committee hearing this morning, Shuman endorsed the proposed Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1969. This legislation has been introduced by two members of the Agriculture Committee — Representatives Charles Teague (R, Calif.) and George Goodling (R, Penn.), 19 other members of the House, and 20 Senators.

"The Food and Agriculture Act of 1965 is a demonstrated failure," the Farm Bureau president said.

"Despite the expenditure of billions of dollars, farm problems have not been solved, and farmers have not achieved a satisfactory level of net farm income."

"A completely new approach is needed," he declared. And he added:

"New legislation should be enacted this year so that farmers can plan ahead. The hour is already late."

Shuman said the proposed Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1969 would provide for a five-year transition period during which acreage controls, base acreages, marketing quotas, processing taxes, and direct payments for wheat, feed grains, and cotton would be phased out. It would also.

—Direct the Secretary of Agriculture to retire at least 10 million acres per year under the Cropland Adjustment Program from 1971 through 1975.

—Provide government price support loans for wheat, feed grains, cotton, and soybeans at not more than 85 percent of the previous three-year-average price beginning with the 1971 crop year.

—Prohibit the sale of government stock of farm commodities at less than 150 percent of the current loan rate plus carrying charges, except when sales are offset by equivalent purchases in the open market.

—Authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to offer a special transitional program to any farmer who has had average gross annual sales of farm products of not more than \$5,000 and off-farm income of not more than \$2,000 per year for husband and wife for the immediately preceding three years. Such farmers would be eligible to receive compensation for acreage allotments and base acreages surrendered to the secretary for permanent cancellation; land retirement payments under the Cropland Adjustment Program; retraining grants; adjustment assistance, and loans under existing credit programs.

This special program for low income farmers, Shuman said, "would help farmers who do not have the resources needed for a successful farming operation to make a transition to more gainful employment." He added that it would be "entirely voluntary." The Farm Bureau president emphasized that, under the pro-

posed legislation, "the transition to the market system would be gradual."

"Substantial payments would be made during the transition period to help farmers make needed adjustments," he said.

He said that, in contrast to existing programs, the proposed expansion of the Cropland Adjustment Program "would more economically divert surplus cropland to noncrop uses."

"The retirement of whole

farms would result in the retirement of some non-land resources and eliminate the increase in per-acre yields which results when resources formerly used for 'diverted acres' are shifted to land that remains in production on the same farm," he said.

"At the end of the proposed phase-out of acreage allotments, marketing quotas, base acreages, certificates and government payments for feed grains, wheat, and cotton each producer would be free to plan his wheat, feed grain, cotton and soybean production so as to make the best uses of his resources in the light of the market outlook. Thus, the way would be clear for farmers to earn and get higher incomes in the marketplace."



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The Farm Bureau president told the Agriculture Committee that Congress should encourage the Nixon Administration to withdraw from the International Wheat Trade Convention so that the depressing effect of "inverse subsidies" can be removed from wheat prices. He also said Congress should continue to reject proposals to authorize the establishment of government reserves of farm commodities.

"Government reserves are not

needed for the protection of consumers," he said.

"They are primarily a device for holding down farm prices."

Shuman was accompanied at the hearing by J. Merrill Anderson, Iowa; Robert Delano, Virginia; Ray Frisbie, Kansas; Allan Grant, California; Floyd Hawkins, Arizona; William Kuhfuss, Illinois; John Pitzer, Pennsylvania; Elton R. Smith, Michigan; and Boswell Stevens, Mississippi, all presidents of their respective State Farm Bureaus.

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