

Farm Bureau Federation Official Hits U. S. Farm Policy

Pennsylvania agriculture may survive the final quarter of the Twentieth Century in spite of the active intervention of the federal government, the assistant director of the Washington office of the American Farm Bureau Federation said in Lancaster Wednesday.

John C. Datt, a veteran of 20 years as a lobbyist in the Nation's Capital, spoke at the Lancaster Rotary Rural-Urban luncheon on "Will the Federal Government be successful in eliminating Pennsylvania Agriculture?" A native of Butler County, he holds an advanced degree in agricultural economics from Pennsylvania State University.

"Under both Democratic and Republican Administrations the federal government has long been pursuing policies detrimental to Keystone State farmers," Datt said.

"President Nixon's government farm program bill, on which the Senate may vote today (Wednesday), is the latest example of discrimination against Northeastern agriculture on the part of Washington.

"It continues the indefensible 'cheap food' policy.

"It does not move away from farmers' dependence on government checks, as President Nixon promised during his campaign to do.

"Fortunately," Datt said,

Pennsylvania's members of Congress have not been a party to passage of the Nixon farm bill. Twelve Pennsylvania Democrats and 13 Republicans voted against it in the House of Representatives and only one Democrat voted for it. Senator Schweiker voted against it and Senator Scott was paired against it.

"No state in the union had a better record in this respect," Datt reported. And he added that eleven Pennsylvanians introduced what he called "sound, constructive farm legislation" during the 91st Congress.

"One of the many weaknesses of the Administration's farm bill," he continued, "is its uni-

form treatment of all wheat. This has taken away any premium which Pennsylvania farmers might have had because of the superior milling qualities of their grain."

"Another area in which Washington is working against your interests," Datt told his Lancaster audience, "is the field of environmental controls.

"If the federal government unduly restricts farmers' use of pesticides, animal drugs, and other production tools, farm production costs will be driven to new highs.

"No research scientist has yet discovered the odorless hog," he said in a humorous reference

to the demands of people whom he called 'environmental purists'."

"An overriding consideration affecting the future of Pennsylvania agriculture," Datt said, "is the economic policy pursued by the federal government."

"It now appears," he forecast, "that full employment will be more of an objective than inflation control is.

"If this course is indeed followed," he said, "watch out!"

"More inflation will increase farmers' costs and reduce the availability of farm labor without necessarily increasing the dollar incomes of producers," he said.

While conceding that he was bringing only "forecasts of stormy weather from the Nation's Capital," Datt said Keystone State farmers and businessmen have "at least one remaining avenue of opportunity open."

"Work for understanding among your fellow citizens and your Congressmen," he said. "You have a fine tradition of active involvement in public affairs. Keep your farm and business organizations working for you and remember that, while Washington may try to lead us in the wrong direction, we Pennsylvanians don't have to be followers. The direction we go is up to you."

Farmers Hit High Taxes At Ag-Industry Banquet

Rising land prices and taxes stemming from population growth are major concerns of local farmers, it was indicated Thursday night at the tenth annual Agriculture-Industry banquet at the Farm and Home Center.

Raymond Stoner of 1051 Eden Road near Lancaster, said, "A major problem is development which increases the taxes on farm land.

"Developments increase land value. The school taxes on property out our way are terrific."

Noting that "city people are moving into rural areas," Carl Hess of Lampeter said, "In rural areas, the bigger population creates more of a tax burden on the farmer. Added services require more taxes. Farm land is taxed as real estate."

Raymond Witmer of Willow Street RD1 also noted that "we're losing the farm land" to investment speculators and developments.

Melvin Stoltzfus of Ronks RD1 said "development isn't a problem in my area yet, but it is one we have to think about. I've heard stories of a farmer selling parts of his land for development. Then the people objected to the farm odors and forced the farmer out of business."

Stoltzfus indicated he is more concerned about the consumer's blaming rising food costs on farmers. He said, "These costs can be attributed to packaging and marketing. The farmer profit is not much higher than it has been. This has been possible only because the farmer has been the most efficient businessman, increasing yields without greatly increasing his own costs."

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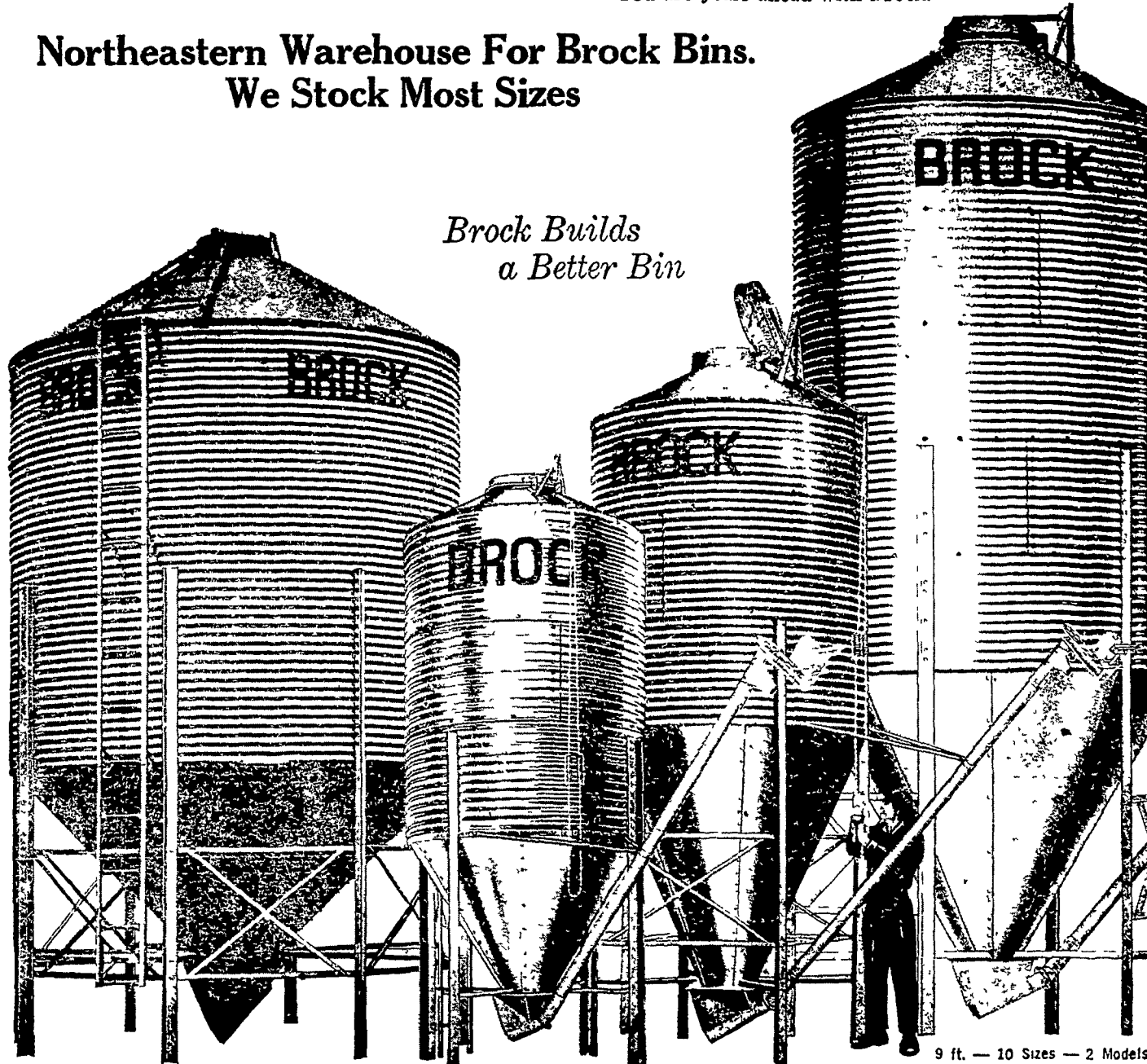
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