

Ahlgren Outlines Need for Rural Development

Henry L. Ahlgren, USDA deputy under secretary for rural development, spoke on what he considers to be a national need to reverse the tide of people moving from rural to urban areas.

According to Ahlgren, it is "generally agreed at the top levels of both the legislative and executive branches that the movement of rural people from smaller communities to larger communities is creating an imbalance in the private sector that puts our nation on a collision course with disaster."

If present trends continue, Ahlgren said, by the year 2,000 most of the people in the U S will be located in one of four major metropolitan areas: the Eastern seaboard, Florida, the Great Lakes or the West coast.

Ahlgren also told Newspaper Farm Editors of America that "the evidence suggests that some cities—New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington—have already reached a point where congestion, housing problems, pollution and crime are almost insoluble. He described conditions in these areas as "socially intolerable, politically unmanageable and economically inefficient."

The feeling is growing, Ahlgren said, that the solution is not to send more people to these places.

At the same time he noted that many of the nation's rural areas have major problems, including lack of facilities which are available in urban areas.

In the past, the emphasis of land grant colleges was on the farm family. But now, these colleges are adding ag economics and marketing issues, social sciences, public policies and public affairs, he noted.

Ahlgren said, "We are now at the point where our rural communities are in almost the same position that farm families were when land grant colleges and the USDA first came into being."

This is all leading to a new thrust in community development, "a subject the President discusses, a subject that has become part of a new language of the executive branch," Ahlgren said.

Commenting on rural development, Ahlgren said, "Like so many things, we have to reach a crisis before we start reaching for solutions."

In legislation sent to Congress, each state will continue an agricultural Extension program of a level and scope carried in 1971 and each state is required to carry on its 4-H and nutrition aid programs.

Under the multi-billion dollar program, no state will get less than it's getting now and most will get more.

In response to a question on welfare, Ahlgren said that a national policy of balanced growth requires a uniform welfare program "that does not provide an advantage to live on welfare in New York City because welfare payments are better."

Without rural development Ahlgren said he sees that within the next few years there will be only about 400,000 giant commercial farms with everybody else having gone to the city because there's no job anywhere else.

Reversing the trend and achieving rural development, he said, is a 15 to 25 year movement.



President Nixon prepares to present a presidential pen to each of the farm editors.

Pesticide Issue Is Discussed

The issue of pesticides was discussed at the National Newspaper Farm Editors of America convention by both a government official and by a representative of a private chemical firm.

H. L. Straube of Stauffer Chemical Company said the chemical industry "will not put dollars into research and development if there is too much restriction."

Straube indicated that chemical industry already is cutting

back on research and development and is increasingly concerned about the national movement toward greater restrictions on pesticide useage.

Straube said pesticides should be evaluated on a "benefit versus risk" basis. He noted that some 200 persons died last year from the misuse of aspirin, but the benefits of aspirin are widespread and no one is seriously proposing that aspirin be banned. The same attitude should prevail in relation to pesticides, he indicated.

He specifically pointed out that no accidental death has ever occurred from DDT.

Dr. Raymond E. Johnson, assistant director of research for the bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in the U. S. Department of the Interior, agreed on the record of DDT and stated, "The Federal government has never banned DDT and has never recommended it."

Dr. Johnson noted that the "World Health organization is the biggest user of DDT" and that "DDT may be the best pesticide for human health ever invented."

Dr. Johnson emphasized that the U. S. government is "Aware of the international implications of U. S. actions on pesticides." He also said there is a strong awareness of the importance of pesticides to farmers in maintaining plentiful food supplies at reasonable costs.

He particularly noted that substantial cutbacks in pesticide re-

search and development would have serious implications for farmers.

But Dr. Johnson also indicated that the movement toward developing better means of monitoring the environment and detecting the adverse effects of pesticides will continue. The trends toward short lived pesticides and toward some type of control of the use of pesticides which are potentially hazardous to the users probably will continue, he indicated.

Commenting on a proposal to license pesticide users, Straube stated he is opposed "because it would take too long for the farmer to respond in event of an insect infestation emergency." He proposed a dual system which would separate relatively harmless pesticides which should need little or no regulations from the more potentially harmful pesticides which may need more regulations.

Asked about the gypsy moth, which has been rapidly spreading in the Northeast and destroying or seriously damaging large acreages of forests, Johnson said, "I'm a little apprehensive about it (the moth)." He said he doubts that the situation "can be controlled without some type of chemicals."

He noted, however, that "there may be natural parasites developing" which will destroy the gypsy moth. The big question, he indicated, is whether the natural enemies will develop fast enough to stop the gypsy moth from causing very high levels of damage.



This was a typical scene during the President's comments at Newspaper Farm Editors of America meeting in the

White House Rose Garden. In the background beautiful Japanese Cherry trees are in full blossom.



In this typical scene at the annual Newspaper Farm Editor's of America conference, S. Archie Holdridge, Hartford Courant, NFEA president, standing, introduces the first speaker of the morning, Clifford Hardin, U.S. secretary of agriculture, who relaxes with his pipe before asking for questions from the farm editors.

Among those present are: from left, Zane Wilson, Lancaster Farming editor and NFEA regional vice president; Bernard Brenner, UPI farm editor; Holdridge, and Hardin. Other farm editors facing the speaker are from North Carolina, Ohio and Wisconsin.

GOP National Chairman Talks

Robert Dole, Republican national chairman, spoke on national and international trends and events and some of their political implications.

Commenting on the outlook for the 1972 elections, Dole said that President Nixon "will need to run on the record and I think we'll have a good story to tell."

Dole said that Vietnam currently is Nixon's biggest political liability but he projected that Vietnam casualties will be down to zero or near zero "before many of Nixon's critics think." When this happens, Dole projected, there will be a big increase in interest in rural development and solving other problems of interest to the American people and "a reservoir of strength" will show up for the President and offset the present attitude of Americans.

The GOP in 1972, according to Dole, will stand for "Generation of Peace, Generation of Progress and Generation of Prosperity."