

# Hardin Explains Price Freeze and Farmers' Role in Fighting Inflation

Exemption of raw agricultural products from the wage-price freeze shows that the highest councils of the government recognize the farmer's contribution toward preventing inflation, Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin said recently in Columbus, Ohio.

Secretary Hardin told the annual meeting of the National Association of Animal Breeders that farm prices have not contributed to inflation.

The price at which the public buys its food and fiber from farmers has risen only 7.8 per cent in the last 20 years, he said, while "a recent labor contract called for a 42 per cent increase in wages over the next 42 months."

"I am in favor of people earning good wages, but where is the justice?" he asked.

During the farm price rise of 7.8 per cent, average hourly manufacturing wages jumped more than 100 per cent, and prices farmers pay for all items climbed 52 per cent, the Secretary stated.

Far from contributing to inflation, farmers, whose productivity per man hour has increased twice as fast as in non-farm industry, have been "holding a handbrake on consumer price increases," Mr. Hardin said.

"If farm prices had gone up either as much as average manufacturing wages or the cost of handling food—from farm to table—consumers would be paying a great deal more for their food."

Agricultural producers have reason to feel encouraged by the current determination to deal forcefully with inflation, the Secretary said.

With the cost of resource inputs stabilized, efficiencies and economies in farm operations can lead to more tangible results," he continued "And, greater yields and higher output per unit of investment can improve farmers' profit-making opportunities as demand for their products grows."

The President's new economic policy—part of which is wage-price freeze—is an effort to stimulate our total domestic economy to produce, he said, adding.

"Tax reductions and the spurring of investments in new productive equipment are designed to create new activity and new jobs. In due course, these actions should benefit farmers by strengthening and expanding the markets for farm products."

"If the effort works out well, in the way we hope it will, markets overseas could improve for a good many American products. This can be particularly significant for farmers and for improved farm income."

Last year, we set a triple record—in total volume of farm exports, the value of farm exports, and the sales for hard dollars."

In large part, this resulted from rising efficiency. U.S. agriculture can make an even stronger contribution, "provided other

countries will let our farm products compete—and, provided that farmers can harvest and move their products to market when ready." He continued:

"All too often, farmers are caught in the crossfire of labor disputes. The recent rail strike and the present dock strike are good examples."

"Farmers, whose incomes depend on moving the harvest when it's ready, are innocent victims of somebody-else's economic warfare. Farmers lose markets and income during the work stoppage, then are caught broadside by the higher costs that follow the strike."

"Farmers wish that they, too, could announce an 8 per cent hike at the end of the affair."


Secretary Hardin said the war is being "wound down on schedule and there has been a massive shift from a wartime to peacetime economy. Defense spending that represented 44 per cent of the national budget has been cut to 32 per cent, while expenditures for peacetime programs have increased correspondingly."

He said that during the period of 1965 to 1969, prices were rising at the rate of 6 per cent a year, "and headed higher." Meanwhile, unemployment averaged 6 per cent a year during much of the 60's.

And, while current unemployment is "too high," the rate of inflation has slowed during the past 18 months, and "never in U.S. history have total employ-

ment, amount of income, and savings been higher," he said. "Those who for selfish reasons oppose the freeze are out of tune

with the needs of the nation, Mr. Hardin said, for "we need to close ranks in the battle against inflation. . . ."



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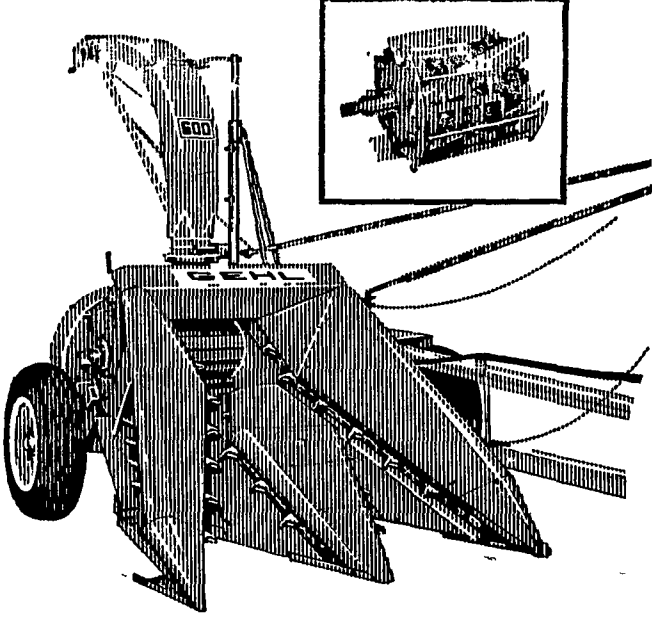
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## Joseph King Reelected Pa. Truckers President

Joseph J. King Jr, Penn Dairies, Inc., Lancaster, was re-elected president of the Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association recently during the Association's 43rd Annual Meeting at the Host Farm Resort Motel.

In addition to being named to a second term as president of the statewide trucking organization, King is currently serving as a member of the board of directors of the Lancaster County Chapter of PMTA and has previously served as chapter president and vice president.