

Butz Says '72 Act Boosts Development Opportunities

The Rural Development Act of 1972 can remake the face of rural America and broaden opportunity for all Americans—urban as well as rural, Earl L. Butz, Secretary of Agriculture, said this week.

The Act confers the major responsibility to coordinate rural development on the Department of Agriculture and provides several new authorities that will help to improve rural economic opportunity and community life. "The result should improve rural America, bolster agriculture and help to relieve urban congestion by reducing migration from farms to city and by encouraging a more balanced national growth," Butz said.

Highlights of the new legislation include:

1. It authorizes guaranteeing and making loans for commercial, industrial, and community development. Private banks and other lenders could make government guaranteed loans to finance rural job creation.

2. It authorizes substitution of insured for direct loans. This would permit private lenders to assume an increased role in financing rural development

and reduce the impact on the Federal Budget of such programs.

3. It authorizes loans to rural youth, and increases the limit for farm operating loans from \$35,000 to \$50,000.

4. It provides for a number of improvements in the administrative machinery of the Farmers Home Administration which will result in more effective program administration.

5. It authorizes cost sharing in watershed project areas for water quality improvement, water supply, pollution abatement, and ground water recharge. Similar authority along with rural fire protection is provided for Resource Conservation and Development areas.

6. It provides for a program to inventory and monitor soil, water, and related conditions, and a land inventory report at five-year intervals.

7. Funds are provided to expand rural development and small farm research and extension activities through the Land-Grant Colleges and Universities

8. It provides annual authorizations for pollution

abatement grants of \$25 million to be made to individuals and an additional \$50 million to communities.

9. It authorizes a three-year grant program for rural fire protection of \$7 million annually.

10. It provides an increase in the annual sewer and water grant authorizations to \$30 million for planning grants and to \$300 million for development grants.

11. It authorizes ten-year cost share contracts under the Rural Environmental Assistance

Program, and provides for cost sharing under this program for pollution abatement practices.

Butz said the Department will cooperate with all other governmental agencies and the private sector to find the best possible means to implement the legislation and to exploit its full potential to the advantage of rural residents and rural communities.

The Secretary said considerable planning and advance work must be done to implement and coordinate this legislation with ongoing programs. This planning which is already underway will require several weeks more. Furthermore, congressional appropriations may be necessary to implement certain of the newly authorized programs.

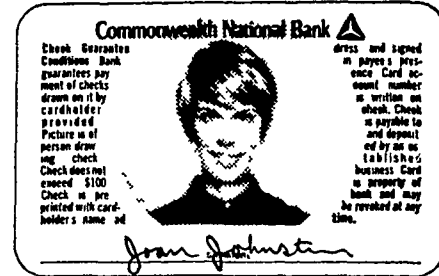
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Contact the Extension Office at 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, Pa. 17601, or phone 394-6851, for details. Registration deadline will be September 26.

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