

## FHA Launches New Emergency Loan Program

Family farmers whose livelihood is threatened by debt burdens resulting from natural disaster now may refinance such debts through a new loan program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration, Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz announced recently.

"Because farmers sometimes are unable to keep payments current on land, improvements or equipment after being struck by a weather-caused emergency," Mr. Butz said, "they may be faced with foreclosure or repossession. This new loan program is designed to help them surmount such obstacles."

Applications will be accepted only from farmers in counties designated within the last three years as eligible for Farmers Home Administration (FHA) emergency loans, either as the result of a major disaster declared by the President, or a natural disaster determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Victims of Hurricanes Agnes and Hurricane Camille are among those who may apply. Residents of counties designated in the future also will be eligible.

Inquiry should be directed to the nearest FHA county office.

Consideration will be limited to those who are unable to obtain credit from other sources. Loans will be secured by real estate mortgages. Those under \$2,500 will be repayable within five years, and larger loans over terms up to 40 years.

Up to 15 percent of the annual budget allocation for emergency purposes may be devoted to debt refinancing loans. The fiscal 1973 authorization for emergency loans is \$135.0 million.

A recent change in legislation on emergency loans allows up to \$5,000 of such loans to be forgiven in cases stemming from disasters which have occurred since June 30, 1971.

In the last four fiscal years (1969-72) Farmers Home Administration has provided nearly \$450 million in emergency loan funds to stricken farmers and rural residents.

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## ED ESHLEMAN'S WASHINGTON REPORT

A Presidential statement on world drug traffic has been needed, and now President Nixon has made it clear that we will not hesitate to take action against countries whose leaders protect the narcotics trade.

For several months there have been stories circulating in Washington about tons of illegal drugs being shipped to the United States from Southeast Asia — principally from Thailand and Laos. According to the President, nations in Asia or anywhere else in the world who continue to condone such traffic by inaction will face a cut-off of all American assistance.

There is no doubt that this is a get tough policy, and a much needed one. We have gone the diplomatic route with some success. You may remember that one of the largest suppliers of the opium used in production of heroin in the past was Turkey who a year or so ago agreed to stop their flow of opium into illicit drug markets. That agreement has seemed to effectively strangle the narcotics traffic from that part of the world. But new drug sources were found where diplomatic efforts have evidently not succeeded, so now it is time to take steps that will force action against drug traffickers in their new bases of operation.

We still are willing to seek cooperation from other countries in stopping the drug flow. President Nixon has instructed our State Department to work in the United Nations for some international restrictions on narcotics. But the new tougher stance serves as a warning that if the cooperation road continues to be deadend, we are going to protect ourselves from foreign dope peddlers.

The new policy is in addition to our previous program of closer surveillance at our borders for illegal importation of dangerous drugs and the crackdown on pushers and dealers here at home. That program has resulted in record amounts of narcotics being found and confiscated and the arrest of record numbers of pushers.

But the best place to stop drug traffic is at its source and not when it's one step away from a user. The sources can be shut down only through seeking or forcing international support of our effort to deal with the drug problem.

I agree with the President that combating drug abuse is one of

our most urgent national priorities. At every level of the drug trade we must wage the fight with effective and forceful programs. We must educate people not to use drugs in the first place; help the user "kick" his habit; run the pusher off the streets and into a jail cell; prosecute and imprison the organized crime syndicates that supply the pushers; and leave the international drug traffickers no safe place from which to operate. In all areas there has been progress, but much more needs to be done.

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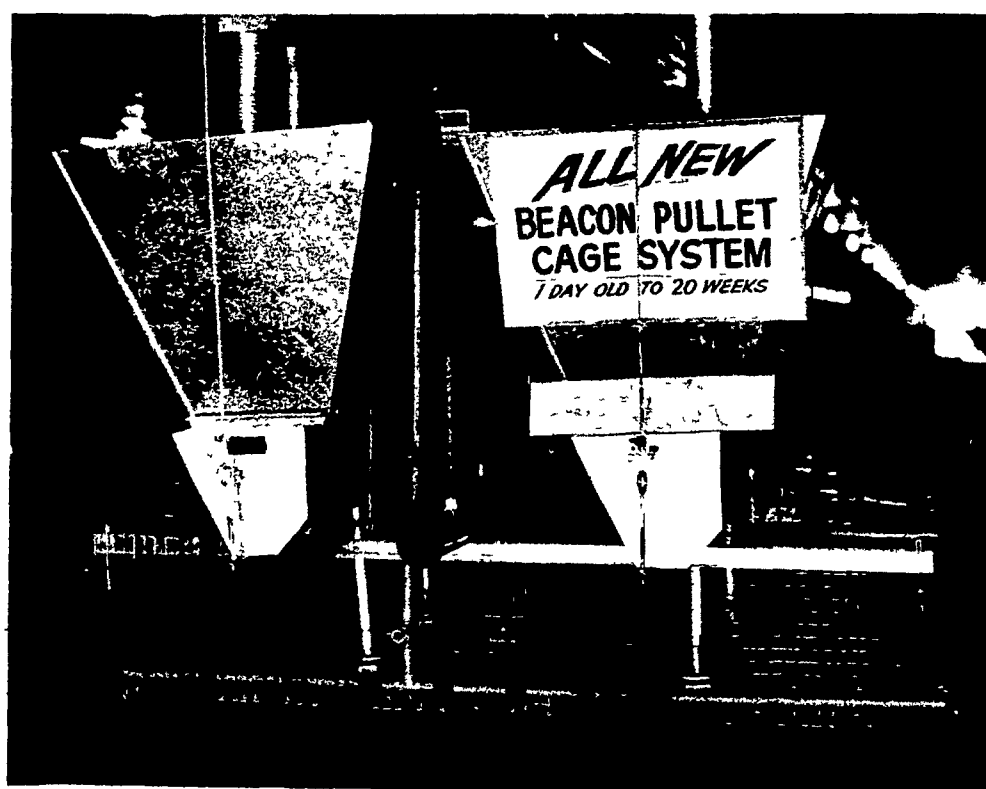
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