

FB's Fleming Discusses Control of Agriculture

Three separate and often opposing groups will be trying to influence Congressional action in 1973 on the issue of who will control agriculture, Roger Fleming, secretary-treasurer of the American Farm Bureau Federation, said in Los Angeles this week in his report to the 54th annual meeting of the Federation.

"You won't be surprised," he said, "when I suggest that farm and ranch families, themselves, should be the most important of these groups. The policies agreed upon at this annual meeting will express the best thinking of Farm Bureau families as to how farmers can control their own future."

Among those competing for the control of agriculture, Fleming said that next to farmers and ranchers, themselves, numerically the largest group is made up of "planners and political activists."

"They advocate government farm programs allegedly designed to preserve the small family farm. Instead of providing a healthy, prosperous agriculture, they would force family farmers into a sort of government managed peasantry."

"When the new 93rd Congress convenes, the proponents of this philosophy—together with their political allies—will be back in Washington trying to sell the

Congress and farmers on the merits of government supply management, international commodity agreements, so-called strategic reserves, and reliance on the crutch of government payments as the basis for farm income."

Another group in the race for power, Fleming, who is also director of the Federation's Washington office, said, is composed of agribusinessmen.

"Too often the reason agribusinessmen oppose government control of farming is their conviction that they are the ones who should do the controlling of farmers. They constitute a third force in the tugging and hauling that is taking place."

"With this in mind, it is easy to understand why the integrators, the processors, the feed dealers, and other handlers react so vehemently in opposition to the National Agricultural Marketing and Bargaining Bill currently under consideration in the Congress."

"They understand that the Sisk bill would require them to negotiate in good faith for contract terms when farmers and ranchers voluntarily develop qualified associations of producers for this purpose. No longer would they be free to dictate contract terms to individual contract growers on a 'take or leave it' basis."

"Significantly, the giants of

agribusiness also have their own solution to the farm labor relations problem. It was the food distribution industry, not food producers, who caved in when Cesar Chavez brought his grape boycott to Chicago and New York.

"And when certain producers finally signed their workers over to the United Farm Workers Union, the first to sign were the conglomerate corporations not the family farmers who are the backbone of the Farm Bureau."

"The agribusiness community, time after time, has provided one excuse after another for those who would concentrate power in the central government to seek to extend their control over all of agriculture."

Turning to another area of concern to farmers and ranchers—fiscal responsibility—Fleming said that government spending will be an over-riding issue in 1973.

"The implications to farmers and ranchers of impending Congressional 'showdowns' on this issue will be far-reaching. For example, it is unrealistic to expect an end to direct controls on price and wages unless the Congress attacks the root cause of inflation—i.e., deficit spending by the federal government."

"The President has good reason to want to phase out direct controls as soon as possible. He knows that they have never worked because they treat the symptoms of inflation, not the root causes. Also, the President understands the importance to the American economy of our efforts to increase productivity and otherwise to become more competitive in domestic and world markets."

"Direct controls have an additional serious negative impact—more important than any of the others. They divert public attention from the Congress, which has the primary responsibility for fiscal decisions—the most important factor in controlling inflation. Instead, direct controls focus public attention on the activities of the Executive Branch of government."

Fleming pointed out that federal spending will exceed \$258 billion—over a quarter of a trillion dollars—in the current fiscal year.

"The Congress has authorized even greater spending in the years to come. And, the appropriations to fund such authorizations will be voted unless the Congress gets the message that the American people are against excessive government spending."

"If the new Congress is to face up to its Constitutional responsibility, it will need the help of the free institutions of this nation."

"Are we in Farm Bureau prepared to extend this help? It would be unrealistic to expect the Congress to cut spending in other areas while leaving untouched spending by the United States Department of Agriculture, including the Commodity Credit Corporation which provides the funds to finance commodity programs, for example."

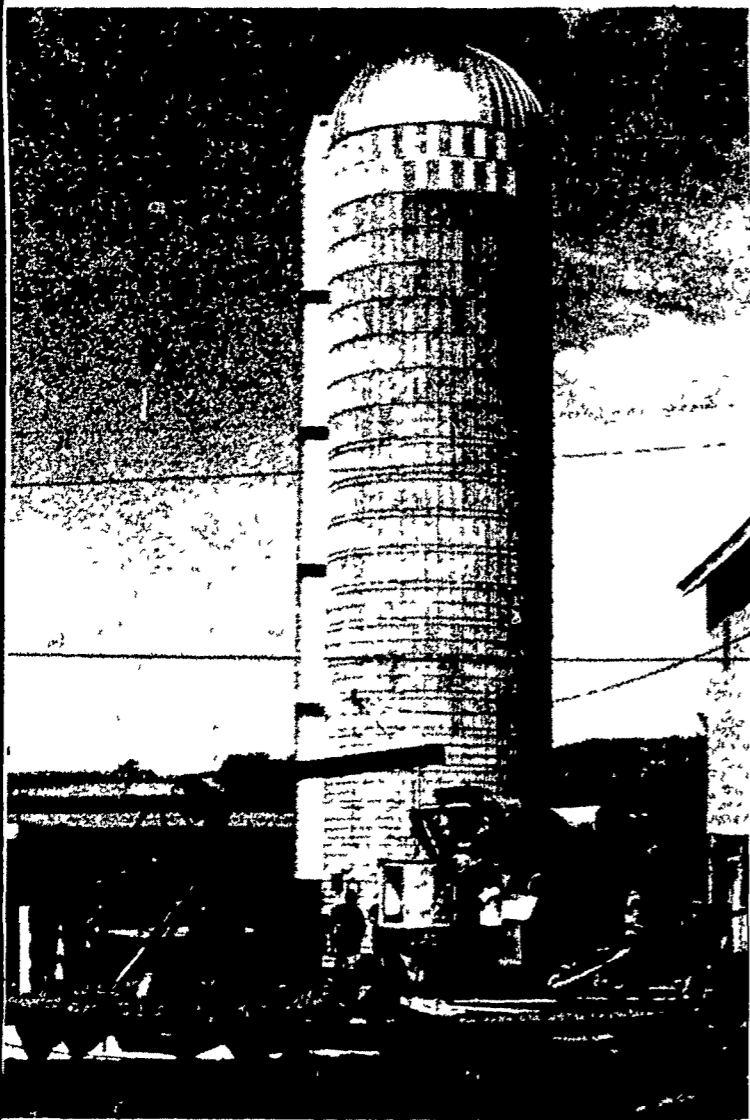
"The record shows that over the years the Farm Bureau has been willing, and ready, to act responsibly in this regard. Alone among the general farm organizations, the Farm Bureau annually has developed recommendations for line-by-line reductions in the budgets of all federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture."

"Maybe it's time to call upon other farm organizations and the various commodity groups to join in the battle for fiscal responsibility. If agriculture ever needed unity on an issue, it's in the matter of cutting government spending."

"Farmers and ranchers are taxpayers and have a vital stake in fiscal responsibility. The general farm organizations have an opportunity to project a positive image of farmers and ranchers by calling on the Congress to reduce federal

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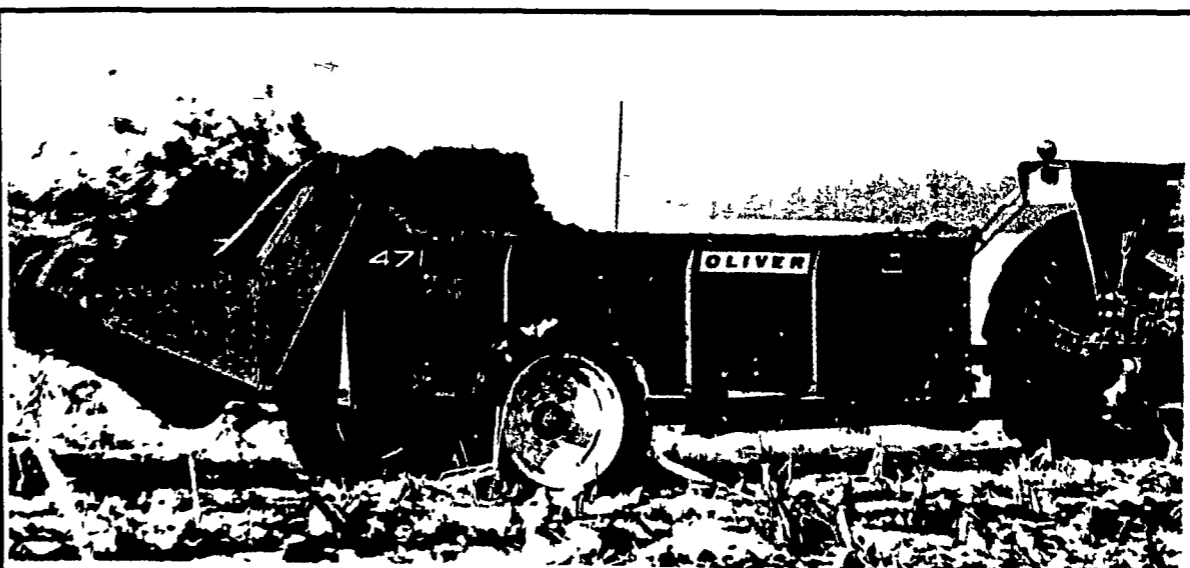
Sounds like I'm fixing to whip up a cake, but I'm really talking about your cows. Just like a cake, it takes a pinch of baking soda, or sodium bicarbonate to your budding animal nutritionists, to get the top performance out of a cow. Normally she takes care of this matter herself by secreting saliva which contains the magic ingredient. However, when the dairyman insists on feeding feeds which go down the pipes with a minimum of saliva needed and containing a goodly percent of acids, poor bossy may be headed for digestive upset.

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