

Report On Meeting With Japanese Minister of Agr.

Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz issued the following statement with reference to his meeting recently with the Hon. Yoshio Sakurauchi, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Japan:

"Mr. Sakurauchi and his party met for about two hours with me and members of the U. S. Department of Agriculture staff. We had a full and frank discussion of agricultural trade questions, with particular attention to export controls.

"The Japanese Minister expressed with great vigor the concern of his country that

controls on U. S. farm exports be avoided. I assured him that no export controls are in prospect, and I agreed that the U. S. export controls in effect on soybeans for a short time this summer had been counter-productive. I emphasized that we continue to be reliable suppliers of agricultural commodities to Japan and other traditional markets and that we are determined to maintain this position.

"We discussed the world supply-and-demand situation for cotton, and I expressed my confidence that there would be no U. S. export controls on cotton. I

also repeated the U. S. Department of Agriculture's opposition to export controls on logs.

"I reviewed for the Minister the progress of the Trade Reform Act of 1973, now in the House Ways and Means Committee. I emphasized the Administration is pressing on a number of fronts for trade liberalization, which would mean fewer restrictions on both exports and imports. Minister Sakurauchi stressed the importance to Japan of U. S. legislative and policy decisions, because of the large volume of farm and industrial trade between the two countries.

whereas Japan has only 13.6 million crop acres in the entire country.

"I emphasized to Minister Sakurauchi our support of open trade in agricultural products in the interest of the U. S.-Japan trade balance, as well as the need for growth in American agriculture. I called his attention to the fact that the United States has removed all production restrictions on soybeans and grains for the 1974 crop year. We hope this can be a permanent policy for American agriculture."

Farmers Urged to Protect Land While Boosting Production

Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz has urged the nation's farmers to use sound conservation practices on crop land that is being brought back into production in 1974.

"First of all, use of sound conservation practices will itself help increase production," Secretary Butz said. "As the No. 1 guardians of the nation's natural resources, farmers have a responsibility to themselves and future generations to use the soil wisely. Farmers have made great progress in the last 35 years in conservation farming, and with planning they can meet the increased demand for food in 1974 without stepping backwards," the Secretary said.

He asked the Soil Conservation Service to give "first priority" to helping farmers and ranchers with their conservation plans. He also called on the Extension Service and state and local Cooperative Extension staffs to renew their efforts to demonstrate that "conservation farming pays—that it is more productive."

Farmers are expected to bring several million acres of former "set-aside" land back into full crop production in 1974 to meet the increased demand for agricultural commodities. The Department of Agriculture also anticipates that farmers will be farming their land more in-

tensively as they try to increase yields per acre.

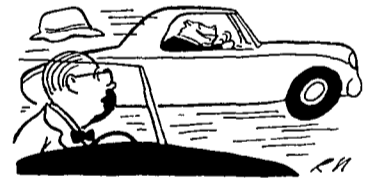
"It is vital that we protect the land from soil erosion with proven conservation practices, such as contour plowing, strip-cropping, terracing, and minimum tillage," Mr. Butz said.

"While there is plenty of additional land in the United States that can be used for crop production without endangering our basic soil and water resources, there are also millions of acres of farm and ranch land with soils so prone to blowing or water erosion that they should never be used for crops," he said.

"Such land should remain in grass or under other vegetative cover," Mr. Butz said. "We do not want to risk starting another Dust Bowl."

The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) works through nearly 3,000 local soil and water conservation districts to help farmers and ranchers develop and carry out conservation plans, and with their national organization, the National Association of Conservation Districts. Both the SCS and Cooperative Extension Service work directly with farmers, advising them on conservation techniques to protect and improve their land and water.

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