

Inflation, Government Spending Share Blame For High Food Prices

More than seven out of 10 non-farm families blame inflation as the main cause of rising food prices in 1973, and 82 percent say that the best way to correct inflation is to cut government spending.

Strong majorities also favor controls on corporation profits and ceilings on retail food prices as methods of assuring reasonable food prices.

But the non-farm public is strongly opposed to raising income taxes, food rationing, and meatless days at stores and restaurants.

An overwhelming proportion of the non-farm American public, 94 percent, think food prices should be lower; and 91 percent would like to see food quality improved.

This was revealed at Chicago today by PACER, Inc., a non-profit corporation made up of the nation's six leading professional agricultural communicator organizations. The nationwide

survey was conducted for PACER, Inc by Response Analysis Corp., a research organization in Princeton, New Jersey. The study was funded by the Office of Communication of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Personal interviews averaging 50 minutes each were conducted from mid-September to mid-October in 2,178 scientifically selected households in 225 locations, a technique that is expected to give accurate results within two to three percentage points.

The PACER survey covered food prices, the environment, rural development, pesticide use, food quality, and public attitudes towards farmers.

The top five causes of 1973 food price levels named by the non-farm public were: inflation, food exports, high farm costs, food industry wages, and higher transportation costs.

People were then given a list of things that might be done to assure reasonable food prices. The top five choices selected by the non-farm public were: cut government spending, restrict food exports, control corporation profits, remove all planting restrictions, and put ceilings on retail food prices.

The PACER survey shows that the non-farm public regards farmers as harder working, more friendly and helpful, more dependable, more productive, more concerned about the environment, and doing more about the environment than the average non-farm person.

Nearly half the non-farm public say that farm prices were too low in the 10-year period 1962-72. Only 19 percent think that farm prices were too high in 1973, and only 6 percent say that high farm incomes were a main cause of 1973 food price levels.

The public overestimates the rise in food prices and underestimates the rise in wages for the 10-year period 1962-72. Average wages increased 64 percent during this period, while food prices rose 37 percent. However, 48 percent of the non-farm public believe that food prices went up faster than wages. Only 27 percent correctly identified wages as having gone up more.

Both medical care and housing costs—up 59 and 41 percent—increased faster than food prices during this 10-year period, but 42 percent of the public think food prices went up the fastest. Only 27 percent correctly identified medical costs as having increased faster than housing and food.

Farm productivity per man hour has been increasing at twice the rate in industry. While nearly half of the non-farm public recognize that farm productivity is greater, one person in five (22 percent) thinks that the increase in farm productivity is lower than non-farm output per hour.

People are concerned about the future of the family farm and rural communities. Generally, the non-farm public endorses the idea of rural development, however, farm residents are somewhat less enthusiastic about rural development than urban residents. People interviewed were told that "rural development" means programs to improve living conditions, services, job opportunities, education, and income levels of rural communities.

Family farming is strongly endorsed by the public—94 percent of the non-farm public

believe that family type farming should be preserved. Also 96 percent say that land should be preserved for food production.

More than four people out of 10 think there will be a food shortage in this country 10 years from now. Women are more apprehensive than men. Among women from low-income families living in center city areas of the South, around 60 percent fear food shortages in 10 years.

A majority of people are concerned about air and water pollution, with young people 18 to 29 years old the most concerned about environmental problems, except for noise. Only 4 percent to 10 percent regard dust from farm fields, smell of feedyards, and farm pesticides as main sources of air pollution. Only 4 percent to 12 percent regard soil erosion from farms, manure and fertilizer runoff, and pesticides as main sources of water pollution.

People were queried about their reaction to the use of pesticides on farms. While non-farm people feel that pesticides are not harmful if used as directed on the label, they would like to see stricter regulation on pesticide use, and a high percent say that a pesticide should not be sold if it may be dangerous to human health. More than half believe that pesticides increase the quality of farm food, but less than half believe that pesticides reduce the price of food to the consumer.

The full PACER study results are broken down into responses for farm and non-farm households, four regions, four non-farm family income groups, two farm income categories, four types of employment categories, men and women, White and Black, four age groups, four community residence locations, and three levels of education.

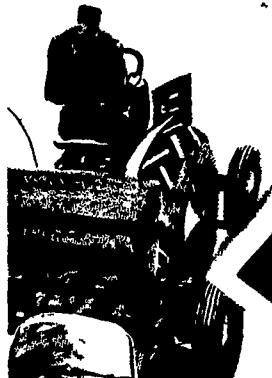
There were significant differences within groups in the response to the survey questions. PACER, Inc. points out that these results within groups will enable interested organizations to direct information programs toward specific audiences in order to enhance public understanding of agriculture.

Six national agricultural communicator associations which are members of PACER, Inc. (Professional Agricultural Communications Editorial Research) are: Agricultural Relations Council, American Agricultural Editors' Association, American Association of Agricultural College Editors, Cooperative Editorial Association, National Association of Farm Broadcasters, and the Newspaper Farm Editors of America.

Further information about the survey is available from PACER, Inc., Suite 503, 1129 20th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.



SERVICE You Can Measure in Greater Crop Profits



VARIETY RESEARCH & SEED TESTING...

At Hoffman we believe research begins to mean something when it finds practical application on the farm in the form of higher crop yields. We keep in close touch with private and public plant breeders... often check their work in our own test plots and on-the-farm trials. The object: to bring you new varieties as soon as results are proved.

PLANNING BETTER PAYING CROPS...

Hoffman service includes a lot more than prompt delivery and the correct order handling. More than 400 Hoffman Seed Men, located in key farming areas, keep up to date on local soil conditions and crop results. They're up on new management ideas... ready to help you solve your crop problems.

SUPERIOR SEED QUALITY STANDARDS

As science discovers new and better ways of insuring seed quality, Hoffman applies those higher standards... in its own seed testing laboratory... in the production fields where seeds are grown... in the warehouse where they are processed and stored.

There are probably two key reasons why more farmers switch to Hoffman Seeds (about 3000 last year)—Superior seed performance and broad, dependable service.

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER AND DISTRIBUTOR OF **FUNK'S-G HYBRIDS**



A.H. HOFFMAN SEEDS, INC.

LANDISVILLE (Lancaster County), PENNSYLVANIA 17538
Pennsylvania's Number One Farm Seed Specialist

Could next Christmas be merrier than this Christmas?

Yes, with a check from our just-opening Christmas Club. When you make the first 49 payments, we make the last one for you!

Farmers National Bank of Quarryville