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'Ladies and gentlemen - the President of the United States!'



Photo by Dieter Krieg

President Ford met with members of the organization, last Tuesday. Among the group was Newspaper Farm Editors of America, a professional Lancaster Farming Editor, Dieter Krieg, right.

Gerald Ford, President of the United States, told farm editors that farm exports would not be curtailed during his administration.

Ford meets with farm editors

By DIETER KRIEG

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Sitting in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, farm editors from across the United States awaited the arrival of the President. They were whispering quietly among themselves, always having one ear tuned to White House staff members and both eyes scanning the walls.

The four large brown doors were of particular interest, for the President could walk through one of them. Attracted by the beauty and significance of the room and its priceless furnishings, many members of the group, including myself, were still wondering if it wasn't a dream. But we knew better. It was real and we would get to see the President. Nevertheless, it was kind of hard to believe.

A White House staff member suddenly announced that the President was still at a meeting and would be delayed by a few minutes.

"We'll wait," responded one of the shy farm editors amidst a ripple of chuckles.

Eyes continued to focus on the highly polished doors, the elaborate paintings, wall decorations, and the impressive table which had a mirror-like shine to it. This was indeed a part of the Executive Mansion known all over the world for its beauty.

Cameras lay on laps and tables and beside chairs. Shutters were cocked. Flash units were ready. Various amounts of adrenalin flowed through our veins. The whispering continued. No one wanted to make much of a sound, and everyone wanted to be alert to jump on his feet when the President arrived.

Occasionally one of the doors in the room would open and someone would

walk through. The anticipation of this proud moment grew.

Suddenly, without prior notice, the door to my right opened and a man proclaimed: "Ladies and gentlemen - the President of the United States!" The words had hardly left his mouth before we had all sprung to our feet and the President came within view. We were in the same room with

Gerald R. Ford, President of the United States of America!

He greeted us with his friendly, mild-mannered style and asked us to be seated. There was absolutely no superficiality about him and he was totally unpretentious. Although no reporter ever forgot where he was, and who the man at the head of the table was, the President's personality made us feel a little more at home. It was under these relatively relaxed and cordial conditions that the questioning began. A report on that follows.

President Ford, when asked to assess the farm vote, conceded that it was "a very important one." He noted that he fared well in Midwestern primaries and considered his overall policies - both at home and abroad - to be working well. The President went on to say that he can take credit for a significant improvement in the situation (economy) during the 21 months that he has been in office. He also pointed out that he is the first President in 20 years to go into an election in a time of peace.

Asked about the future of Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz, Ford commended the Secretary for having done "a superb job in both the legislative and administrative sense.

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Ag outlook is favorable

By MELISSA PIPER

LANCASTER - In the wake of an announcement this week that steel prices would be increasing once again, farmers will no doubt be looking toward another rise in farm machinery prices. But although such increases seem imminent, economists still feel that agricultural input costs will decrease or at least stabilize

during the bicentennial year.

A recent outlook study from the USDA - Economic Research Service stated that during the first quarter of 1976, farm input costs were up six percent compared to 12 percent last year. Lower costs for feed and fertilizer accounted for much of the decrease. Without the harsh winter feared, natural gas for fertilizer production was

ample in supply allowing the average price to decrease by a 25 percent. In some areas the price dipped 40 percent from the predicted high.

Fuel supplies also remained plentiful with prices one to two cents per gallon lower - once again due to the mild winter along the east coast.

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