

# Ag policies scored

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Asked to be more specific about the changes he mentioned having taken place in recent years to benefit agriculture, Feltner stressed as he had in his opening remarks, the importance of the decrease in government control over agricultural production in the past few years. He pointed out that farmers are now being permitted to make the decisions on what to grow and where to grow it. He added that for the most part, the farmer's decision has been to increase production and that the larger amounts are moving into exports. As an example of the restraint being placed on government control, Feltner cited the recent increase of loan rates for wheat from \$1.50 to \$2.25. Mentioning that some people feel that the increase was too low considering the current price of wheat, Feltner said a higher rate "would price wheat so high under a loan program that it would wind up being owned by the government."

Another reference to Feltner's opening remarks was made in the form of a question concerning an earlier claim that farm income has risen considerably in the recent years while statistics indicate that farm income decreased between 1973 and 1975. In answer, Feltner pointed out that there will always be some fluctuation but "what's important is the trend of it." The implication was that that trend is up and Feltner furthered that "the policy for producing for a world market" will assure that that trend continues.

One farmer present commented on the amounts of beef being imported considering the already low beef prices in this country. Feltner stated that steps have already been taken to "impose import quotas" which he said, will reduce the amount of beef coming in from other countries; although he emphasized that there is "no legal way" to eliminate the imports altogether.

In reply to a question regarding grain embargos, Feltner commented that President Ford has made plain his objection to embargos but admitted that it is impossible for anyone to predict the "dire emergencies" that might arise to necessitate one. He later commented on the State Department's influence in the matter of embargos stating that it (the State Dept.) does justly have a role in the matter as it influences national defense, our Armed Forces based in foreign lands, or agreements we are in the process of formulating with other nations, but that the "degree" of influence is the issue. "It is really a matter of balance," he said.

Responding to a question as to whether or not he felt the Food Stamp Program should remain in USDA or be transferred to another agency such as HEW, Feltner said that his personal feeling was that it ought to be in HEW "but I would hasten to say that we have taken the position all along that as long as it is in agriculture, we're going to do the very best job that we can to administer it." The



Richard Feltner

idea of possibly transferring it to HEW as proposed three years ago, he added, has been on "the back burner" for the last couple of years, but he feels certain that it will be reconsidered sometime after the first of the year as new Food Stamp legislation is due in 1977.

Feltner was named Assistant Secretary in April 1974. He presently directs the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Food and Nutrition Service, and the Packers and Stockyards Administration.

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# Land-use meeting held

LANCASTER, Pa. - A land-use meeting held here this week took a turn for the better, according to Lancaster County Extension Agent, Jay Irwin.

Irwin told Lancaster Farming in an interview on Wednesday that "audience reactions were good and farmers as well as township supervisors contributed."

Held in the Farm and Home Center, here, the meeting was the largest yet held on land-use in Lancaster County. Approximately 70 persons were in attendance, compared to as few as 15 the week before. Land-use is concerned to be of uppermost importance by many legislators and farm leaders.

Details on the issues involved were presented in a

page 1 story of last week's Lancaster Farming.

As was pointed out at meetings in other areas, the consensus of those attending was that final decisions regarding land-use should be left up to local authorities. State control is being opposed. Some individuals also noted, said Irwin, that the land-use problem would not have to be an issue if farmers had a large enough return on their investments to find the sale of their properties unnecessary.

The suggestion was made by one individual that stronger control should be exercised in deciding where industry may locate. More specifically, he suggested industry move to areas of high unemployment, reasoning that it would

reduce the necessity of people having to move to where industry locates (should it move to an area where employment is already high).

"I was impressed with the comments," noted Irwin.

A farmer in the audience pointed out that some development had taken place around his farm and since then he has experienced several instances of flooding. He urged that greater consideration be given to a stream's capacity of handling run-off from paved over areas.

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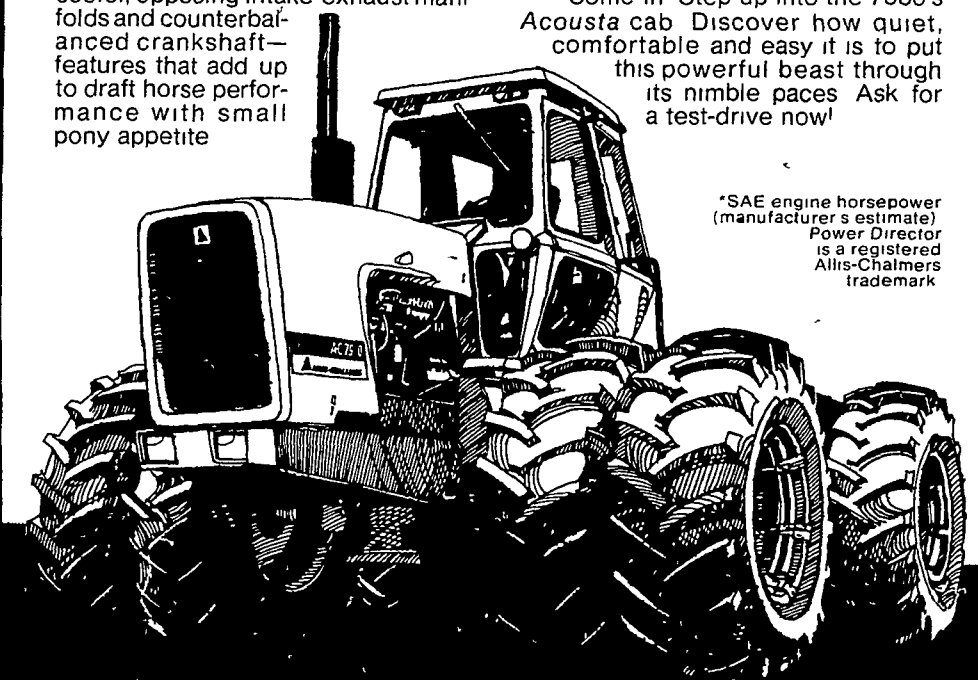
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