

Increased price supports favored

HARRISBURG - Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Raymond J. Kerstetter has called for a yearly increase in target price supports as part of a federal Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act in 1977 which would provide a balance of all interests affected by policy decisions.

"We are all in the same game," Kerstetter said. "We all lose when the farmer, the processor or the consumer loses. No one segment of agriculture and the food distribution process can live alone, we are all interdependent."

"The basic authority for our federal farm legislation will expire at the end of the 1977 crop years, so Congress must decide at what level to set price supports, target prices and loan levels. We need these contained in a national food policy which would recognize agricultural production, producer incentives, nutritional standards, food distribution problems, commodity reserves and consumer needs," Kerstetter said.

"Our farm program should seek to assure a minimum level of income security and protection from disasters for farm producers. Although price supports will not be the only component of our farm policy, it clearly will be one of the most important and most difficult to decide upon."

Support payments under the target price concept are primarily to supplement the income effects of short-term price fluctuations. Disaster payments are designed to protect the producer against the economic impact of natural disasters.

Kerstetter said that target prices for the three major commodities should be set at the full cost of production. "Obviously the costs of production vary widely with the costs

of land and the yield per acre. But we have reasonably good estimates of 1974 and 1975 crop production costs which can be used for projections of costs for 1977, 1978 and the future," Kerstetter said.

Target prices should be increased yearly to a figure at the total cost of production, including a reasonable charge for land, according to Kerstetter.

The introduction of the target price concept came in the 1973 Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act. The purpose

Poultry still strong

HARRISBURG - Pennsylvania's poultry production dipped slightly during the week ending December 25, 1976, but maintained level above last year's production, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

Placements of broiler chicks were 1,688,000. The placements were five per cent below the previous week, but 22 per cent above the corresponding week a year earlier.

Average placements during the past ten weeks were 30 per cent above a year ago.

In the 21 key poultry producing states, placements were 60,602,000. This figure is about the same as the previous week and seven per cent above the same week in 1975.

Average placements in the 21 key states during the past ten weeks were five per cent above a year ago.

of the target price is to provide a basis for varying price support payments to producers inversely with market prices. This eliminates a great swine in income or loss to the producer during any crop year.

No payments are made to farmers if the market prices are above the established market price. If market prices fall below the target price, then support payments are made for the difference, under the present act.

No price support payments have been made through the first three years of operation of the 1973 Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act. Total payments to any person under the 1973 act are limited to \$20,000 per year for price support and disaster payments.



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