

American farmers check European trade potential

BRUSSELS, Belgium — A delegation of 12 American farmers headed by American Farm Bureau president, Allan Grant, has just concluded visits with EC representatives on freer trade for agricultural commodities. Of major concern to both the EC and the United States are the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT) negotiations which are to resume this year in Geneva.

"After a year of discussing procedures for the talks," said Grant, "the EC is ready to discuss agriculture and ways and means to minimize trade barriers."

Some 90 nations are involved in the GATT talks, the goal of which is to promote freer exchange of goods and services in the world market by reducing tariff and nontariff barriers. The talks are important to American farmers because of more than \$22 billion worth of farm products the United States exported in 1975, of which \$15 billion worth were confronted with some form of trade barriers or restrictions.

"We have found that they are determined to get something moving in the GATT negotiations this

year," said Grant. "We've been stalled for a year. We've met with them and their philosophies are different from ours. They have a regulated economy with prices on commodities set at some fictitious level which has nothing to do with the market and we have to compete with those commodities if they are subsidized in their export from the European Community."

"We've told them under no uncertain terms that we could compete with farmers anywhere in the world but not with subsidized products. They understand this and Robert Strauss, the U.S. Representative to the GATT talks, and the EC's Olav Gundelach are determined to make some progress during 1977."

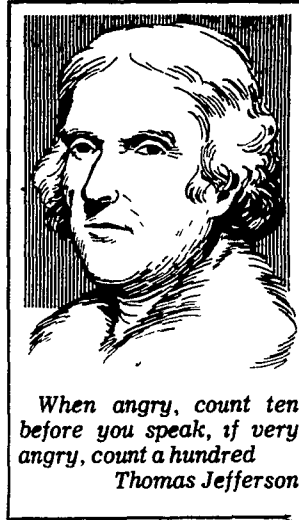
"Solving the problem isn't going to be easy," continued the AFBF president, "because many countries want a separate set of standards for agricultural goods, while the United States is bargaining for equal footing for both agriculture and industry. This is important to all Americans because the agricultural community provides more than \$22

billion worth of agricultural commodities for export and that helps pay for foreign oil."

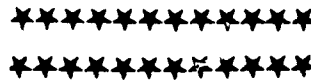
The purpose of the 10-day series of conferences with EC leaders is to pave the way toward mutually beneficial trade policies between the U.S. and the European Community. The group hopes its meetings will lead to the reduction of trade restrictions and barriers, especially the variable import levies now imposed by the EC which hamper the free flow of agricultural commodities exported by the United States.



American Viewpoints



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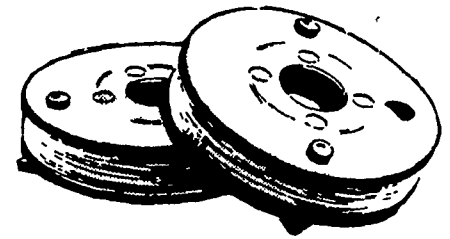


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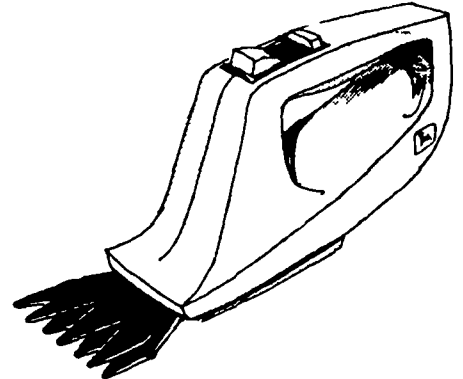


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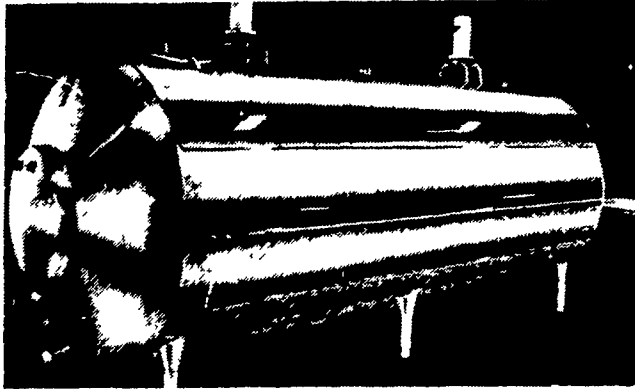
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