

# Government suspected of price manipulation

CHICAGO, Ill. - A poll, conducted by International Harvester's FARM FORUM Magazine, indicates that almost three-quarters of farmers polled believe that the U.S. Government is actively involved in manipulating the prices farmers receive for the products they sell.

A total of 46 per cent believe that the U.S. will have a serious shortage of food within the next two to 10 years.

These and other conclusions are based on a random sampling of 1000 U.S. farmers who voiced their opinions on a variety of questions concerning food prices

In response to the question, "Do you believe the U.S. Government is actively involved in manipulating the prices farmers receive for the products they sell," 72 per cent responded yes. Another 22 per cent felt there was "some involvement." Only 5 per cent said there was little or no manipulation by the government.

When asked whether they felt food processors, wholesalers and-or retailers were involved in price fixing, 60 per cent felt food processors did engage in price fixing, 54 per cent felt wholesalers did, and 47 per cent believed retailers were involved. And 56 per cent of those interviewed felt that processors and food manufacturers were receiving more than their fair share of the consumer food dollar, while less than one per cent felt the farmer was receiving a fair share.

With the high price of food a major concern for most people, some 34 per cent of the respondents felt that increasing prices of farm products has hurt the image of the farmer. More than a third (36 per cent) felt it had somewhat hurt the farmer's image, and 23 per cent felt it had very little effect.

Despite the fact that the farmers blame processors, wholesalers and retailers for price fixing and receiving more than their fair share of the consumer food dollar, 50 per cent of the farmers believe that consumers blame the farmer for increasing costs. The farmers believe that government officials have the greatest influence on food prices.

Which one of the following do you believe has the most influence on food prices?

Government officials	38 per cent
Commodity speculators	19 per cent
Processors	18 per cent
Retailers	12 per cent
Wholesalers	8 per cent
Consumers	8 per cent
Shippers	1 per cent

Less than one per cent felt that farmers have the greatest influence. In most farmers' minds, consumer boycotts have very little effect in lowering retail food prices. In response to the question, "Are consumer boycotts effective in lowering prices of food at the retail level," the farmers answered as follows:

Definitely lower prices	17 per cent
Somewhat	27 per cent
Very little	33 per cent
No effect	10 per cent
No, they actually increase prices	13 per cent

On the other hand, some 43 per cent of the farmers felt that consumer boycotts definitely depress the prices farmers receive at the farm level. And 34 per cent felt these actions "somewhat" depress prices.

An alarming percentage (21 per cent) of the farmers said they were getting discouraged and might give up farming if the present trend for operating costs and market prices continues. Nine per cent felt they could only hang on for one more year. But almost half - 45 per cent - felt they would make it somehow, even though times are tough.

When asked if they felt the U.S. would have a serious food shortage in the very near future, the farmers responded as follows:

Yes, next 2 or 3 years	11 per cent
Yes, next 5 years	17 per cent
Yes, next 10 years	18 per cent
Yes, next 15 years	11 per cent
Not in this century	27 per cent
No, U.S. always will have plenty of food	14 per cent

Perhaps most important for the consumer, when asked if food prices at the retail level would rise or fall in the next 12 months, the farmers responded:

Rise 21-30 per cent	3 per cent
Rise 11-20 per cent	15 per cent
Rise 1-10 per cent	55 per cent
Stay the same	13 per cent
Fall 1-10 per cent	11 per cent
Fall 11-20 per cent	1 per cent

Yet despite the farmers' distrust of government influences and policies in agriculture; their feelings that processors, wholesalers and retailers are involved in price fixing; and their belief that the farmer is not receiving his fair share of the consumer dollar spent on food; the majority indicated a desire and an intent to remain in farming and do their best to insure that the U.S. would not face a food shortage.

## Penn Willow elects officers

The Penn Willow 4-H club Lancaster R6; Teresa recently held its first Dagen, Lancaster R6; and meeting of the year to Donna Walton, Conestoga reorganize and elect of-

ficers. Jay Irwin, Lancaster County Extension Agent, attended the meeting.

The new officers are as follows: Sandy Dagen, Lancaster R6, president; Teresa Dagen, Lancaster R6, vice president; Donna Walton, Conestoga R1, secretary; Lorraine Huber, and Brenda Huntzinger, Conestoga R1, song and game leaders, and Pam Goss, Pequea R1, news reporter.

Representatives of the Lancaster County 4-H Council are: Sandy Dagen,

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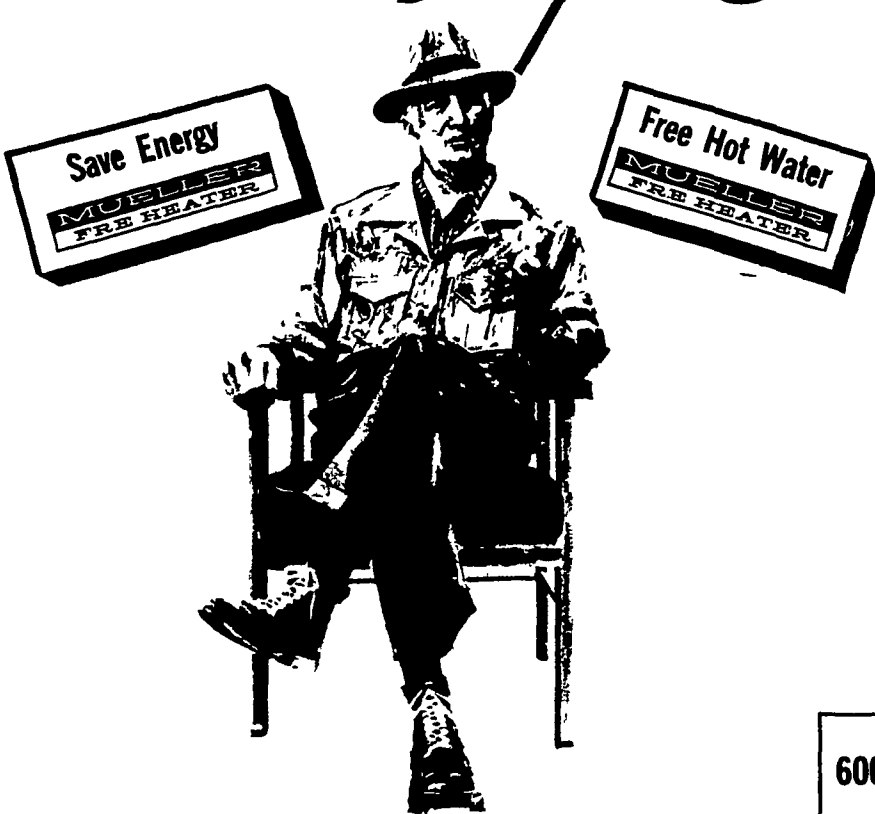
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