

# Farm insurance contemplated

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Kansas City. Crop production levels are used to determine the size of loans and aid.

The broadened relief and lending agency envisioned by Bergland would "junk all the Mickey Mouse aid programs we now have." The new plan would work similar to the present crop insurance program, Bergland explained, while adding that that federal agency could also use some improvements.

Bergland would like to see a relief and lending plan which is based on a three-tier structure. The first of these levels would be least expensive and provide a farmer with coverage only for "out-of-pocket costs" such as seeds, fertilizer, etc. The second level of rate structure would cost more and cover all of the first level

plus such costs as machine depreciation and taxes, etc. The third stage would be most costly to subscribe to, but will cover all of the above expenses as well as rent and mortgage payments

Other comments made by Bergland during the news conference centered on high land prices. The Secretary said he believes "land values are out of sight," and that he would do everything he can to make them be more rational. "I will not support policies which feed land inflation," he said. One of his primary reasons for this kind of thinking is to not make it worse yet for young farmers to buy farms. The Secretary noted too that this is why a net return of four per cent was arbitrarily built into the recently established target price formulas. Some segments of the farm

population wanted the return rate up as high as 10 per cent. "The 10 per cent return would invite speculators with investments like we've never seen before and spell economic disaster for young people," Bergland warned.

Bergland also said he does not presently encourage expansion of beef herds. "That's the last thing we need," he remarked. Asked about grazing policies on

government land, he said it isn't in his Department's plans to allow it, and if so, then only under very tightly controlled circumstances. He believes open grazing policies would invite unbridled expansion of beef herds and wind up having a detrimental effect on the U.S. cattle industry.

Tobacco legislation was another topic touched upon by the USDA chief. He says

he does not believe that a change in price supports on flue-cured tobacco would have effect on the burley crop. There are no plans for changing the present price support formula. As it's set up, the government could end up swallowing losses on lower quality leaves.

In its October report, USDA said flue-cured prices moved to record highs as production slipped due to

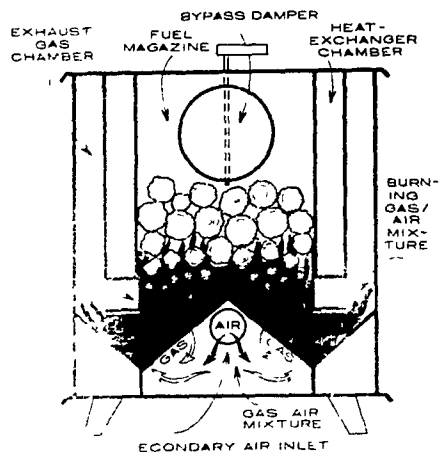
lower quotas and reduced yields in the flue-cured belt. Weekly sales early September averaged \$1.35 per pound, 17 cents above a year earlier, but cash receipts and net returns to growers are still forecast to trail 1976 because of the drought-reduced crop.

Tobacco exports, particularly flue-cured, face severe competition in foreign markets.



USDA Secretary Bob Bergland, left, met with 30 editors of farm publications last week, answering their questions, and briefing them on the Carter Administration's agricultural policies. Among those present for the day's sessions, which included a 30-minute meeting with President Carter, was Lancaster Farming's editor, Dieter Krieg, right.

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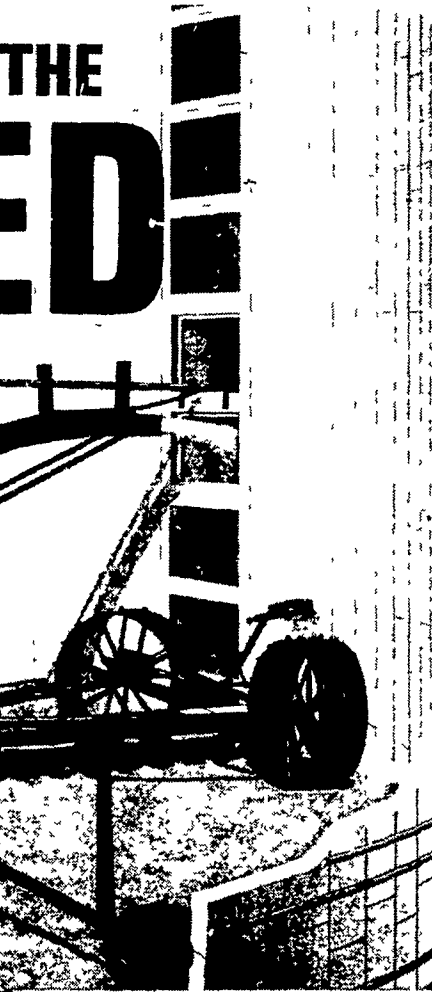
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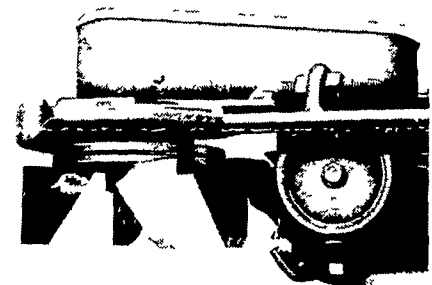
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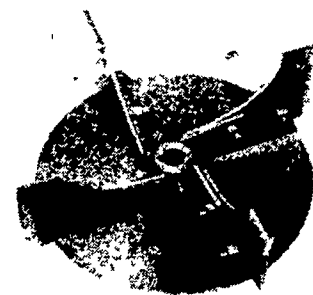
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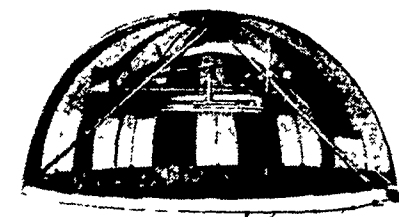
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