

# Portions of new farm bill



By DIETER KRIEG

WASHINGTON — Although the new Farm Bill, signed last month by President Carter, is just a few weeks old, it's already taking effect in agricultural circles.

The President, in remarks made at the signing of the Bill in the Rose Garden, referred to it as the most far-reaching and important piece of agricultural legislation that has been passed in 40 years.

"I think it is also accurate to point out," the President commented, "that more than has ever been the case in the past, professional nutritionists and their representatives, private citizens, consumer groups, have been involved in the preparation of this legislation."

In making his remarks, the President acknowledged agriculture as being the Nation's number one economic resource, and added that the 1977 bill places a heavy emphasis on the strength of the American farm family.

Two items on the program which are of importance to farmers in this region are grain target prices and loan rates. Consideration might also be given to provisions which apply to disaster programs, although details of that are still pending the resolution of a new all-exclusive crop insurance program. Highlights of the proposal were printed in *Lancaster Farming* two weeks ago, after Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland revealed his thoughts on that subject to a gathering of farm editors, here.

The Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 applies to crops being harvested right now, or those which have been in bins since an earlier harvesting time this Summer.

The per bushel target price and minimum loan rate for corn are both \$2.00 for 1977, according to provisions of the new bill. In 1978 the minimum loan rate will be \$2.00 and the target price \$2.10. Loan rates and target prices for barley and grain sorghum will be at levels determined to be "fair and reasonable in relation to the levels set for corn," says a USDA information sheet on the matter.

The target price per bushel for wheat is \$2.90 for this year increasing to \$3.00 in 1978. But if production is reduced to 1.8 billion bushels next year, the target price will be \$3.05. Minimum loan rates will be \$2.25 in 1977 and \$2.35 in subsequent years, the USDA reports.

The provision for deficiency payments states that payments made for feed grains, rice and wheat will be made on the effective allotment. This year's payments for

feed grains and wheat will be based on the target prices announced under the old law for unplanted acreage and on the target prices of the new law for planted acreage with in the allotment, says USDA. After this year the payments will be based on planted acreage rather than the allotment for all crops.

Sections of the 1977 Food and Agriculture Act which deal with commodity programs were reportedly the most controversial. A USDA spokesman says it "required constant negotiation and compromise to arrive at target and loan levels that were reasonably acceptable to Congress.

In other sections of the new bill, USDA is maintaining a minimum milk support price of 80 per cent minimum with semi-annual adjustment. Neither now, nor under terms of the new bill, may the support price for milk rise above 90 per cent of parity.

In other sections of the new bill, USDA is maintaining a minimum milk support price of 80 per cent parity until March 31, 1979. After that date it'll change to a 75 per cent minimum with semi-annual adjustment. Neither now, nor under terms of the new bill, may the support price for milk rise above 90 per cent of parity.

Wool support prices will be at 85 per cent. Price supports will be adjusted annually. Right now they're 99 cents per pound.

Bookkeeper indemnity programs were extended for four years.

The President, inspeaking about the Bill, spoke highly of the efforts which were made to tie target prices to production costs, adding more equity can thereby be insured.

## GRAIN RESERVES

A farmer-owner reserve program for wheat is mandated, with terms and conditions essentially identical to the program announced last April. Farmers are encouraged to hold wheat off the market until prices rise to at least 140 per cent (minimum can be between 140 and 160 per cent of the \$2.35 loan, or \$3.29 to \$3.76 per bushel. The Secretary can call the loan when the market price rises above 175 per cent of the loan, or \$4.11 per bushel. There is a minimum of 300 million bushels (19.1 million tons), with the maximum adjustable pending the outcome of international grain reserve talks, says USDA.

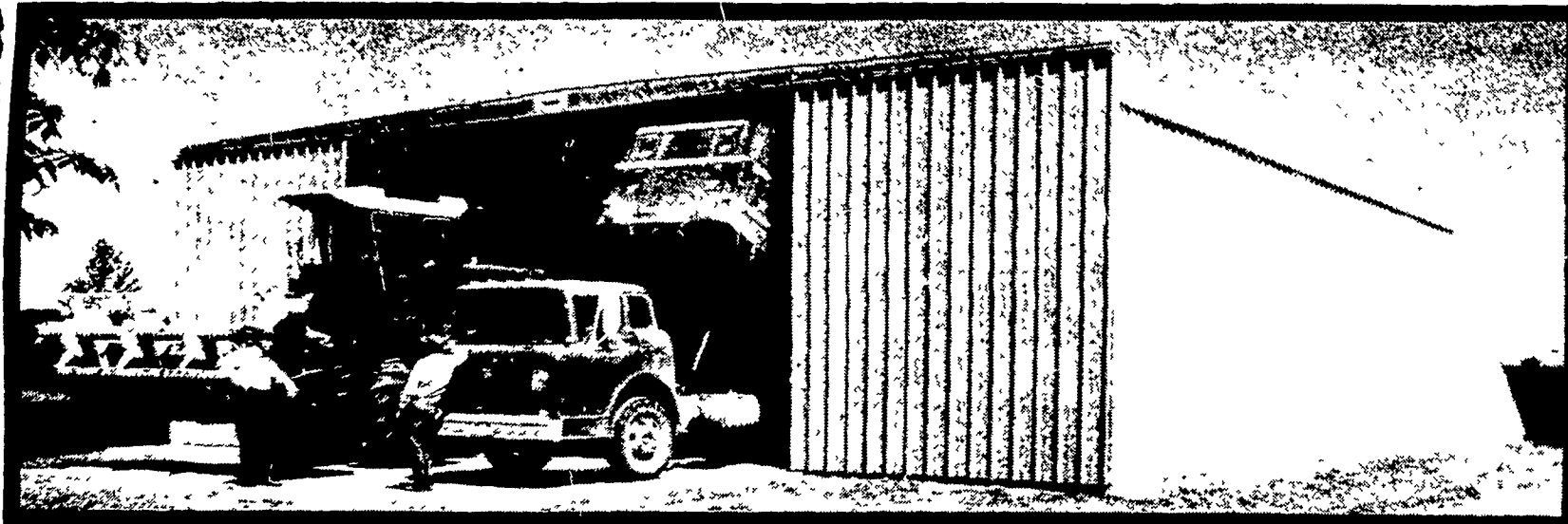
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President Carter believes the food stamp provisions within the 1977 Food and Agriculture Act "are a great step forward in providing a simple food stamp system and one that would be easy to administer, one that is more equitable, which eliminates the pervasive threat of fraud."

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