

## Agriculture to get top priority under senate compromise gas bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Herman E. Talmadge, chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, sought and received assurances last week that American agriculture would receive "high priority" under the compromise natural gas pricing bill now being debated by the Senate.

Entering the debate on the controversial and complex energy bill, Talmadge said "utter chaos" would occur in the production and processing of food and fiber unless farmers are assured "a dependable supply of reasonably priced natural gas."

Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington, chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and floor manager of the bill, assured Talmadge that essential agricultural uses for natural gases would be

protected if the bill becomes law.

In response to a series of questions propounded by Talmadge, Jackson agreed with the Georgian's interpretation of the bill that farmers would receive the "same high priority accorded households and small businesses in protection against sharply higher natural gas prices by exempting agriculture users from the incremental pricing features of the bill."

Jackson also agreed with Talmadge that the bill "provides an exemption

against natural gas curtailment for essential agriculture uses."

Jackson warned that agricultural users of natural gas would experience some price increases. But he said that would not be "as great as boiler fuel or other industrial plant increases in that category."

Talmadge reminded the Senate that in recent Winters some dairy processing plants had been denied natural gas and that supplies to some fertilizer plants were curtailed during the Winter of 1973/74. He asked

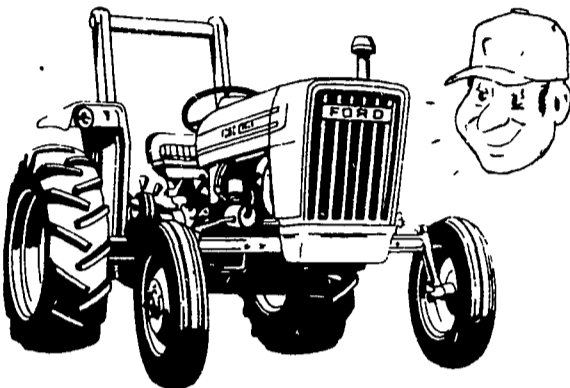
Jackson if the bill would prevent a repetition of those or greater curtailments.

"The answer is yes," Jackson responded. "What

we have done is to protect essential agricultural uses."

Talmadge has stated that he expects to support the compromise gas bill even

though it is not "wholly satisfactory from any standpoint." He said it is "the best we have been able to work out."



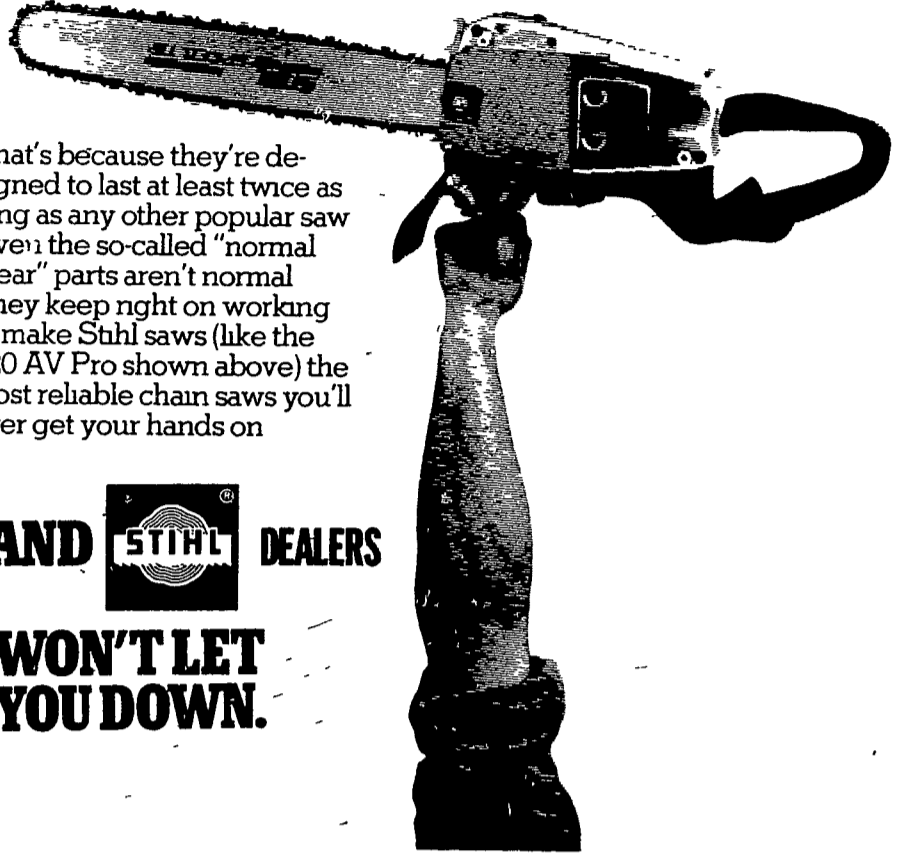
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