

1978 Census of Agriculture being prepared

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Final preparations are underway at the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, for the next Census of Agriculture which will begin in January to canvass farm and ranch activities across the Nation for calendar 1978. Every household which conducts agricultural operations will receive its form in the mail at the turn of the year.

Report forms for the 1978 census have been drastically reduced from the 22 pages of the last farm census. In this census, 21st in a series that started in 1840, most farm

and ranch operators will receive a four-page form in the mail, while some will receive a five-page version.

On the report form, each farmer or rancher will need answer only questions that apply to his or her operation. The form is arranged so that individual questions or sections dealing with crops and livestock not produced can be skipped.

The overall time required by farmers to complete the form has been reduced an estimated one-third.

In developing the report forms, the Census Bureau obtained the advice of far-

mers, representatives of farm suppliers, agricultural universities, Congress, and State and Federal program agencies. Two tests of the census form were conducted to determine that the questions were easily understood so farmers and ranchers could accurately supply the information requested.

The new farm census has been advanced one year to put into phase with the five-year cycle of censuses of retail and wholesale business, industry and manufactures starting in 1982. After that, the farm

censuses will be held for years ending in 2 and 7.

Completed forms should be mailed back as soon as possible in January in the confidential, postage-paid envelopes provided. Estimates are acceptable and should be reported in the absence of firm records.

Recipients of census report forms are asked not to discard them. Follow-up mailings costing additional public funds in postage will be required until all forms are received. Despite careful screening of the mailing lists used, some persons not engaged in

agricultural activities in 1978 will receive report forms. Those persons should return the form with that fact noted, so that additional mailings can be avoided.

Response to the census is required by law (Title 13, United States Code). By the

same law, information furnished on report forms is kept confidential and even other government agencies cannot obtain or use the report made by any farmer or rancher. The law also provides that copies retained by the operator are immune from legal process.

Bergland expects more trade with China

HONG KONG — Statement by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland at a press conference here recently:

"As you know, we have just completed a ten-day tour of the Peoples' Republic of China. Our delegation has visited Peking, Shanghai, Chengtu and Canton — meeting with national and provincial agricultural officials and touring their agricultural facilities.

"We were all impressed by the openness with which the Chinese approached our talks and the obvious sincerity of their desire to cooperate with the United States in several agricultural fields.

"I personally have no doubts that there will be a noticeable expansion of agricultural trade between the two countries and we have already begun to work out the details for exchanges in agricultural sciences, technology and statistics.

"The Chinese seem most interested in specific exchanges in the areas of germ plasm — seed research and selection — biological control of pests, livestock and veterinary sciences and agricultural education

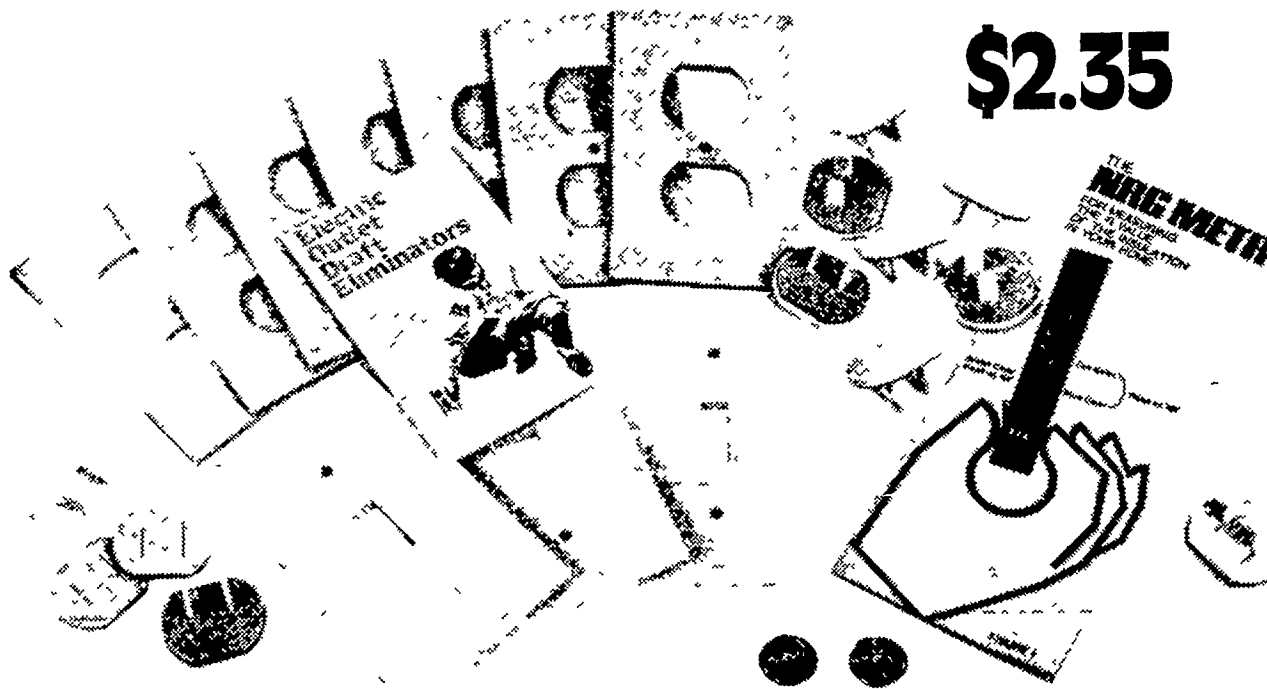
methods. This cooperation will include exchanges of students, scientists and technicians and will be mutually beneficial.

"They have also asked us to help facilitate — and we have agreed — contacts between their government and American manufacturers of agricultural equipment and supplies. The areas which seem most promising are farm machinery and chemicals, and equipment and technology for animal feed production, food processing and agricultural plastics.

"We have proposed that participants in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's cooperator program should conduct further discussions on the products and technology best suited to conditions in China. They have agreed and we expect Department of Agriculture-led teams to begin visiting China early next year.

"Based on our discussions, we believe that the Chinese are likely to become regular and significant purchasers of U.S. grains and cotton. Thus, it appears that the prospects are good for a continued growth in our agriculture trade."

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