

Gasoline rationing plan questioned

WASHINGTON, D.C., — The proposed Federal Contingency Gasoline Rationing Plan does nothing to assure the U.S. farmer that fuel supplies will be available to provide needed farm production inputs, noted a fertilizer industry spokesman this week.

In testimony before both Senate and House subcommittees on energy, Edwin M. Wheeler, president, The Fertilizer Institute, urged that the Administration's plan be amended to allow agriculture to meet the food needs of the nation.

He pointed out that although the plan gives priority for fuel use at the farm, there is no priority given in getting crop production items, such as fertilizer, to the farm — or in getting food items from farm to market.

"Does it make sense to

leave gasoline needs for 'essential agricultural uses' up to a white market?" Wheeler asked. Under the currently-proposed plan the movement of "swizzle-sticks" would be as important as movement of essential food production input items, or of food, itself, he noted.

Availability of gasoline supplies for the movement of crop production items is essential to adequate U.S. food and fiber output, Wheeler noted. For example, if fertilizer doesn't arrive on time for Spring plantings, yields will be reduced and consumer food supplies will suffer for both U.S. and export needs.

Gasoline for mass public transportation, sanitation and snow removal services are deemed "priority" under the current plan, Wheeler noted, yet gasoline needs for delivery of fer-

tizer and other essential food production inputs are left out.

As a bench mark, Wheeler pointed out that, currently, an estimated 211,000,000 gallons of gasoline are needed annually just for delivery of fertilizer from

retailer to farm gate. The delivery and use of this fertilizer directly accounts for 30 to 40 per cent of the nation's agricultural output, he noted, which further emphasizes the importance of this segment of fuel use.

China gets ag lift

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A U.S. market development team has reached informal agreement with Chinese officials for several non-profit U.S. agricultural export promotion groups to work with China in modernizing its agriculture, according to Thomas R. Hughes, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

Hughes, co-leader of the team, which left China recently after 10 days of talks, said the U.S. groups will assist in the development of baking and feed processing industries and in

seeds and grassland management.

The trip was a follow-up of Secretary of Bob Bergland's visit to China last November, during which the Chinese discussed with department officials their broad goals and requirements for agriculture.

Hughes, who accompanied Bergland to China in November, said the Chinese at that time had expressed interest in U.S. market development cooperator program, in which the department works with commodity organizations in a cooperative export effort.

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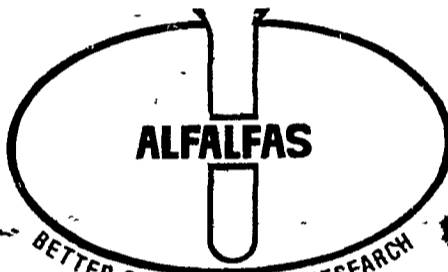
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