

## Farmers would be losers

## Gas rationing plan called unfair

WASHINGTON, D.C. - All 18 members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry last week told President Carter that his proposed standby gasoline rationing plan is unfair to farmers and other rural Americans.

In a joint letter, the Committee members urged the President to send Congress changes in the plan that they say are needed to correct features adverse to agriculture and rural America. Under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, Congress itself cannot

amend the rationing plan but must vote to approve or disapprove the President's proposal.

The letter followed hearings earlier last week by the Subcommittee on Rural Development, which were held at the request of Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), ranking minority member of the full Committee. Senator Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), chairman of the subcommittee, has announced that he cannot support the standby rationing plan in its present form.

Signers of the letter included Democrats Herman E. Talmadge (Georgia), chairman, George McGovern (South Dakota), Walter D. Huddleston (Kentucky), Richard B. Stone (Florida), Leahy, Edward Zorinsky (Nebraska), John Melcher (Montana), Donald W. Stewart (Alabama), David H. Pryor (Arkansas), and David L. Boren (Oklahoma); and Republicans Helms, Milton R. Young (North Dakota), Bob Dole (Kansas), S. I. Hayakawa (California),

Richard G. Lugar (Indiana), Thad Cochran (Mississippi), Rudy Boschwitz (Minnesota), and Roger W. Jepsen (Iowa).

The letter raised two basic objections to the rationing plan as proposed:

(1) Although farmers would receive supplemental gasoline allocations for off-highway vehicles such as tractors, they would receive no priority allocation for fuel for on-highway vehicles such as trucks needed for marketing food commodities and other farm operations. Neither does the plan make

any special allowance for the distribution of production items needed by farmers such as feed, fertilizer, and seed.

(2) Persons living in rural areas and who must drive greater distances to their jobs, to buy food, to receive medical attention, or for other essential purposes would receive no special consideration under the President's plan. The plan proposes to allocate gasoline rationing coupons on a registered vehicle basis.

"Rural people would suffer disproportionately since there are no alternatives such as mass transit for most of them," the Agriculture Committee members wrote. "This seems most unfair, and it is a continual reminder to us that for most government actions or regulations proposed in Washington, rural residents are not given an adequate voice in such decisions."

The letter pointed out that no hearings on the proposed rationing plan were held in rural areas, although hearings were held in several major cities in the Nation.

The Committee members

said that the current gas rationing proposal is the first to be made since World War II that did not assure agriculture full priority in receiving gasoline supplies.

"It makes no sense to give farmers gasoline for their tractors if they cannot get the items they need to grow a crop or the necessary gasoline is not available to process and sell agricultural products to the American consumer," the senators said.

"Both farmers and consumers, and thus the Nation, would be the losers as shortages would arise and prices would escalate while Federal officials tried to discover what went wrong with the plan that looked so good on paper."

The letter noted that presidential assistant Stuart E. Eizenstat had acknowledged that the rationing plan "has a serious bias against rural America" and had proposed that additional gasoline coupons be made available to rural States for reserves.

"These assurances, however, are not officially in the plan," the senators told the President. "We need more than assurances."

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## Cedar Crest FFA elects officers

LEBANON - On April 26 the Cedar Crest FFA held its officer elections for 1979-1980. The newly elected officers are:

President Dawn Shirk; Vice-President Michael Balsbaugh; Secretary Mark Patches; Treasurer Ronald Copenhaver; Reporter Gary Mase; Sentinel John Kline; Parliamentarian Steve Wenger; Chaplain Robert Bomberger.

County Delegates: Dawn Shirk and Michael Balsbaugh.

Chapter Sweetheart: Dawn Shirk.

Before the elections Roy Shirk, FFA Vice-President, gave a speech dealing with election of officers and what the characteristics of a good officer are. After the elections, chocolate milk and donuts were enjoyed by all in attendance.

Later on in the week, Roy Shirk finished second in the FFA Eastern Regional Extemporaneous Public Speaking Contest held at Lehigh County AVTS. Roy will now represent the Eastern Region in the state contest at the Pennsylvania State University in June.



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