

Embargo poses problems

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invasion of Afghanistan," Grant said.

"I am convinced that Russia can be a continuing and growing market for U.S. farm commodities, if encouraged," the farm leader said. "Export embargoes or moratoriums directed against one nation confuse and antagonize all trading partners and should be avoided unless national security is clearly involved.

As alternatives to a farm commodity boycott against Russia, Grant said that the U.S. should immediately rebuild a properly balanced, superior defense system; control the export of high technology and expertise to Communist countries; reassemble our largely dismantled intelligence network; reinstate the selective service registration system; build up military bases with

emphasis on the Persian Gulf area, and reject the Salt II treaty.

The military intervention in Afghanistan has triggered a new phase in world affairs, said PennAg Industries.

At least some students of international politics feel that the Soviets, with their own oil reserves being depleted coupled with the rapid escalation of prices charged by OPEC, have now reached the point where direct intervention seems to be their only recourse to assure them of a continued supply of petroleum.

The response to this by the United States and others will be to develop ways to keep the bear caged.

In short, the chill factor will rise substantially.

It is interesting to note that, campaign promises notwithstanding, President Jimmy Carter followed other executives before him of both political parties in

response to an international crisis by imposing an embargo on grain and other food as the first action.

Thus no matter how much rhetoric is voiced over "food as aid in promoting peace and brotherhood", it is a weapon and will be used as such.

There is some evidence that the President may not have been completely aware of the full repercussions of his precipitous action - but he is now. Markets have shut down and little, if any, trade is occurring. Confusion is king.

Trade observers are not in complete agreement about the ultimate effect on markets but they do more or less agree that the degree of impact will be tempered by what programs and relief ideas government planners can concoct within the next few days.

Which brings us to what specific programs might be proposed. As of this writing,

the only tangible items mentioned by the President were diversions to gasohol and perhaps some additional P. L. 480 programs.

While the five million tons of corn mentioned for gasohol could be set aside, the possibility of an immediate production of 500 million gallons is remote, according to a majority of those we've talked with. Another possibility is having CCC step back into the picture with a government-owned inventory.

Charles Wismer, Jr., Master of the Pennsylvania State Grange criticized the embargo saying it is the farmer who is bearing most of the burden once again.

"Shouldn't all trade to the USSR be cancelled?" he asked.

"Why does the American Farmer have to take the beating of embargoes?"

"This is the third embargo we have seen in recent years," he said, "and in each of the other two instances, prices have gone down."

Wismer said that while he was concerned about what was happening in Afghanistan, and remains loyal to the U.S. government, many questions remain unanswered.

He asked what happens to all U.S. grain that is going in storage now, and whether it would be sold to another country which, in turn, could sell it to the Russians.

He also asked what it would do to beef cattle prices.

"I pity the poor farmer who is storing grain. As it is our 1980 planting costs are skyrocketing," he said.

The Pennsylvania Farmers Union set its position in a special committee session held this week in Harrisburg.

The committee believes that while the embargo of 17 million metric tons of grain appears to have been a correct action given the grave circumstances of Soviet adventurism, this Nation's farmers must be protected from immediate and future price drop.

Grain prices, as a percentage of parity, have been so low for so long, that any financial loss to the American farmer is intolerable. It would be especially insulting to have government guarantees against loss for the world's handful of huge grain companies, while America's farmers are made to suffer the brunt of financial loss.

The Farmers Union committee also warned that the President's action should be made to work at all cost. The government of the U.S. must assure that effective

roadblocks exist to keep grain from other parts of the world from reaching Soviet harbors

"Agricultural interests should avoid panic or rash decisions in light of the Presidential announcement," warned Ed Wheeler, President of the Fertilizer Institute in Washington, D.C.

"Two weeks ago, none of us foresaw such a turn of events, and two weeks hence the situation may well change around again.

"Meanwhile, all of us in the entire farm chain would do well to proceed with caution and avoid rash action until the foreign relations panorama further unfolds," he added.

The fertilizer association executive noted that U.S. feed grain farmers would be hardest hit because the USSR consistently contracts, as is currently the case, for twice as much corn as wheat.

"While wheat farmers are very dependent upon total exports, the action against the Soviets will bean most heavily on the corn movement," he said.

Wheeler pointed out that both President Carter and Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland have at once assured the farmers of prompt action to protect them from onerous financial burdens arising out of the embargoes.

He added, "It is clear, however, that farmers will in all likelihood plant all-out unless, to be eligible for relief, they must reduce their acreage. Were low grain prices to be the rule this spring, one would expect

the farmers to surmount this dilemma by more production."

President Carter's embargo on grain shipments to the Soviet Union has already had a serious impact on farmers and agribusiness in Pennsylvania, according to Jay Wolgemuth, president of PennAg Industries Association.

And for the foreseeable future, Wolgemuth added, farmers and grain dealers will continue to feel the reverberations of the embargo, announced by the President Friday night during his speech about the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

During the meeting, the board adopted a motion to support the National Grain and Feed Dealers' Association in its attempt to work with the White House on minimizing the impact of the embargo on small grain traders.

Geoge Blankley, a Philadelphia grain dealer, observed during the meeting that the President had announced intentions to soften the effects of the embargo on grain farmers and exporters, but that little thought had apparently been given to the impact the move have on the rest of the agricultural community.

Blankley said he expected to see a drop in the price of corn from 25- to 50 cents a bushel.

While cheaper grain might at first glance seem something of a boon for Pennsylvania's livestock and poultry farmers, Blankley observed that the market prices for hogs and eggs had already dropped precipitously since trading began Monday morning.

Mondale announces action to offset grain embargo

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Vice President Walter F. Mondale Friday announced the Commodity Credit Corporation is prepared to assume the contractual obligations for wheat, corn and soybeans previously committed for shipment to the Soviet Union. The CCC will offer to assume these contracts at the contract price minus any costs that have not already been paid.

"Our purpose is to protect against losses, not to guarantee profits," the Vice President said.

This action is one of several being taken to stabilize farm product prices and to insure that the burden of the suspension on agricultural deliveries to the Soviet Union will not fall unfairly on farmers, he said.

It will assure that the quantities of grain that would have been shipped to the Soviet Union will be isolated from the market and that America's farmers will be in the same position as if the sales to the Soviet Union had gone forward.

"This action is necessary to avoid significant disruptions to the cash and futures markets, especially for corn and wheat, with consequent damage to the interests of farmers," the Vice President said.

None of the grain so purchased, the Vice

President said, will be resold into the market until it can be done without adversely affecting market prices.

As already announced, the Department intends to use amounts of wheat equivalent to the quantity that would have gone to the Soviet Union for shipments to needy nations under the P.L. 480 program and for the Food Security Reserve that we have asked Congress to authorize. With respect to corn, our goal is to encourage farmers to place additional quantities into the farmer-owned reserve.

Bucks repeats vegetable title

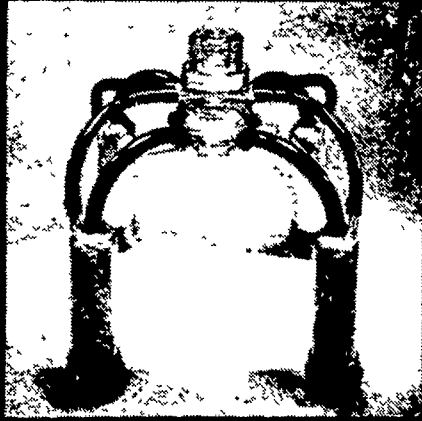
HARRISBURG — The Bucks County Vegetable Growers' Association repeated as winners of the best county vegetable exhibit at the 51th Farm Show.

This marks the 15th straight year that the Bucks County group has captured the title.

The best farmers' display was exhibited by Solly Brothers of Ivyland, Bucks County.

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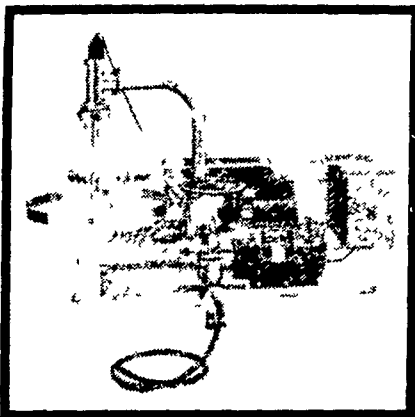
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