

Exclusive interview

Grange Master discusses embargo, farm leadership

CARLISLE — It's a good thing Edward Andersen decided to have his farm sale on January 3.

Andersen, elected Master of the National Grange at its meeting in Lancaster this past November, was selling off equipment and livestock preparing for his move to Washington, D.C..

He returned to his farm about 15 miles outside of Omaha, closed out his responsibilities as Nebraska State Master, and headed back to Washington.

"I was really fortunate I had my sale on the day before Carter made the announcement on the grain embargo because it really had an effect as far as farm sales are concerned," he said.

"I wasn't sure how serious it would be," he admitted.

But a week after his sale there was a sale about two miles from his farm. Only about a third as many people showed up for the sale after the embargo.

The neighbor had three tractors and none were sold.

"I had a terrific sale. But a week later it was a buyers' sale.

"It really was too bad because it was strictly a psychological thing. People just didn't know what to do."

The Grange has come out as reluctantly in support of the President's embargo.

Andersen said he saw little indication of any livestock feeders profiting at the expense of the grain growers.

"The cash grain market has been coming up. In some areas it is almost up to where it was before Carter made the announcement.

"They are going to have to do something. They are going to have to remove this corn from the market," he said.

"By raising the loan level they are trying to find out how much grain the producers will put into reserve.

"I think that is limited because the storage is limited, their storage is filled. And they have to look forward to harvesting wheat this June and July."

Andersen said there is a good chance China will join Mexico in buying more grain.

Another thing that will help us is most European countries have a shortfall and will not be moving grain into Russia, he said.

"Another thing I think is a good sign because of the embargo is the administration is going full steam ahead with a gasohol program from grain or other products.

"They have made that decision, they are behind it," he said.

He admitted the 500 million gallon production goal is at least two years away.

Another thing that is going to help the embargo is pushing for a paid diversion program for this coming year," he said.

"We want the acres diverted so we do not produce an excess again. We've lost that market and it

will be a period of time before we get the market back again."

Despite the current Washington climate, Andersen said he sees no possibility the Grange will begin to endorse particular candidates who are more understanding of agriculture and farming.

"I don't think our stand will ever change," he said. "I think this is one of the strong points of the Grange.

"We are political organization, but we are bipartisan. Our constitution does not allow us to get involved with politics.

"We get involved with issues, we get involved with the people. But we can't endorse a candidate or a partisan issue.

"As far as the grain embargo is concerned we see that as President Carter acting in the best interest of national security.

"I believe the average farmer in this country is ahead of President Carter as far as taking a hard line with Russia," he noted.

The president also committed himself to seeing the farmer did not bear the full impact of the embargo.

"Our obligation is to see that is carried out, that the farmer does not suffer the full impact," Andersen said.

While the Grange is steeped in farm affairs, Grange membership is growing older and includes many members one generation off the farm.

Andersen said he did not see this as a problem for the organization.

He said the including all of rural America makes the Grange more responsive to the whole community.

"In congress we testify and people know we are representative of everyone in that community, not just the farmer. We represent the broad spectrum of farmers and are not pitting one special interest against the other," he said.

"They recognize our policy has been developed by people in all walks of life which makes ours a stronger policy," he said.

He agreed USDA was moving away from the hard-core farming aspect it had in years past and is spending more time with the consumer-related factions.

But Andersen pointed out it is in the farmer's best interest to have a strong community to live in. And it's in the community's best interest to have the farmer do well, too.

"The area we are concerned with most in the past three or four years of the Carter administration is the consumerism of USDA. That we think is a problem.

"They need a degree of concern but I think they have over-emphasized it," he added.

He said the Grange was not too worried about where the leadership of tomorrow will come from.

He noted the majority of Grange leaders continue to be farmers, even in highly developed parts of the country.

He said he was surprised



Edward Andersen, Master of the National Grange, said Saturday he reluctantly supports the embargo of grain to Russia. But he noted he was glad he held this farm sale the day before the President imposed the embargo.

by the number of non-farmers who are trying to convince the farmer of the value of land preservation.

He said it is those people who are trying to convince the farmer to save his own land.

"The need for leadership is a constant, ongoing thing in any organization," he said.

"I'm not concerned that farmers could be outvoted in some of our Granges," he added. "Many of our most devoted members are ag business or one generation off the farm."

He said energy is certainly a problem, although not the most serious problem we have.

He said it was important the food processors, as well as the farmers, get the fuel they need to move and distribute farm goods.

"The Energy Department needs to recognize that processors and transportation people need the energy just as bad as the farmer," Andersen said.

"Inflation hurts farmers more than other industry," he said.

He said this is because, as a percentage of net income, the farmer has more invested in inputs than other major industries.

The farmer's marketing ability is limited, so he can't pass it on, he said.

"He can't demand a price for his product. He doesn't have that much influence in the market at this time on agricultural products," he said.

"Milk is probably the best example of what can be done if farmers organize and use their cooperative efforts," he concluded. — CH

Estate planning subject of Eastern Lancaster Co. Adult Farmers

EAST EARL — The Eastern Lancaster County Adult Farmer Program will sponsor a meeting on Wednesday evening, January 30 to discuss the effect that increasing land values, salaries and other assets have on estates.

Larger estate values increase inheritance, gift, and income tax obligations of the family.

A properly planned estate can assure the correct transfer of assets, provide financial security to family members and save thousands of dollars in taxes and other cost. Young and old both need a sound estate plan to protect their families.

Speaker for the evening is Mr. Kenneth Howard, attorney with Hassel, Yost, and Sorrentino of Lancaster and New Holland.

Mr. Howard has done extensive work in estate planning and will have many enlightening ideas on estate planning.

Anyone interested in more information on estate planning is invited to attend the meeting to be held at 7.30 p.m. in the Union Grove School. The school is located 2 miles north of Route 23 on Route 625.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Bob Anderson, at 215 - 445-5041

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