

Farm Credit hearing

(Continued from Page D13)

financing. It would permit the Banks for Cooperatives to finance the export activities of cooperatives.

In commenting on the proposal, Wilkinson said that "agricultural exports are one of the few bright spots in the current U.S. balance of trade picture."

He said the export proposal is based on the premise that more can be done by U.S. farmers to export their own products and that the means for this participation is through farmer-owned cooperatives.

According to Wilkinson, the Banks for Cooperatives provide some two-thirds of all financing used by American cooperatives. Those cooperatives have more than \$500 million invested in the capital stock of the banks. Yet, when marketing endeavors carry co-op products overseas, the co-ops have to seek other avenues of financing — avenues frequently unfamiliar with cooperatives.

The co-ops tell us, Wilkinson continued, that they want their own credit institutions to provide these services. The export financing amendment would make that possible, he said.

The fifth proposal, according to Governor Wilkinson, involves expanding the Farm Credit System's capacity for serving the needs of commercial fishermen.

The Farm Credit Act of 1971 first gave Production Credit Associations the authority to make loans to the "farmers of the sea."

The Allen-Weaver bill enacted in early 1979 authorized these loans to be lengthened from 7 to 15 years. The new proposals

would help fishermen in three ways.

One would authorize the Federal Land Banks to make long-term loans on dockside and other facilities necessary for efficient aquatic operations. The second would authorize the Federal Intermediate Credit Banks to discount the notes of fishermen given to other financing institutions just as farmers' notes are discounted. And the third would clarify that cooperatives organized to provide business services to fishermen were eligible to borrow from a Bank for Cooperatives.

The sixth amendment considered significant by the FCA chief involves the Farm Credit Administration itself. Within certain limits, it would allow the Federal Farm Credit Board to set the salaries of the governor and deputy governors. And, it would allow FCA to manage salaries below those levels, as well as to manage such things as travel allowances, procurement, and property.

"This authority," the governor said, "would make it far easier to recruit, hire, and retain qualified people to supervise and regulate this ever-growing credit organization."

During the hearings held thus far, Wilkinson and others pointed out that enactment of the proposed legislation would result in no expenditure of tax dollars.

The money the System lends is obtained through the sale of securities in the national and international money markets. Its securities are no guaranteed by the Government. Even the expenses of the Farm Credit Administration are

DES MOINES, Ia. — The National Pork Producers Council has won its fight to overturn a USDA labeling regulation as Federal Judge William C. Stuart ruled in NPPC's favor in the "uncured" meat labeling case.

Judge Stewart, who had earlier granted NPPC, a temporary injunction, said in a recent ruling that the labeling order is "arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion and otherwise not in accordance with law" and granted the plaintiff's request for permanent injunction in the action.

The ruling also said it is the court's belief that fears for human health dangers because of the labeling "are genuine and that it is the opinion of the court that the USDA failed "to give adequate attention to the dangers of botulism, the manner in which the public cares for nitrite-preserved products and the effectiveness of labeling."

Referring to the consumer's demand for uncured products as a reason for the labeling, Judge Stuart noted that with almost 170 uncured products on the market under their own names,

paid through assessments to the banks.

Wilkinson emphasized the proposed amendments constitute no redirection of the historic mission of the Farm Credit System.

"Rather he said, "we believe these modifications are needed to enable the System to more effectively fulfill its historic mission.

permuting use of traditional names and requiring similarity between cured and uncured products is not necessary to make the products available to those who want them.

The NPPC had taken issue with the regulation and filed suit in U.S. District Court in Des Moines September 20, 1979, against USDA's regulation that would allow fresh meats to be marketed with an uncured label and would allow such products to have the same general appearance and taste as a cured product. Three Congressmen joined in the suite along with the National Independent Meat Packers Association, an intervenor in the action.

"Our concern," says NPPC President Bill Buller, Brookings, SD, "was that consumers would treat these uncured look-alike products as they had the traditional cured product and that such inadvertent mishandling would be hazardous to consumer health and secondly, to protect the traditional image or reliability of cured meat products.

"We have no objection to, and in fact encourage the marketing and consumption of fresh meat but we insist that its appearance and labeling not leave any doubt in the consumer's mind that it should be handled with the traditional care required of fresh meat."

Buller said today's ruling is once more an indication that the government must learn accountability is

essential before implementing regulations for the sake of regulations.

"The Council and livestock industry representatives are no longer willing to just stand by and watch themselves regulated by capricious agency actions," Buller said. "Government and the USDA, must realize regulations imposed will be tested if producers and the industry believe such

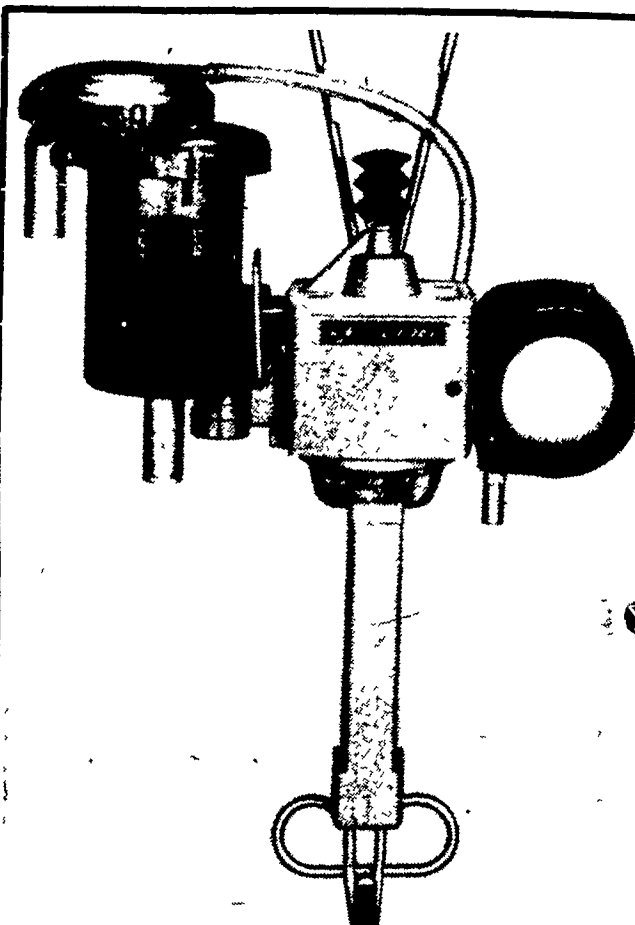
regulations unreasonable and unnecessary."

The February 12 ruling indicated that Judge Stuart was delaying action on a government appeal of the earlier preliminary injunction and was filing his ruling on merits of the present case "in order to provide defendants an opportunity to present the entire matter at one time."

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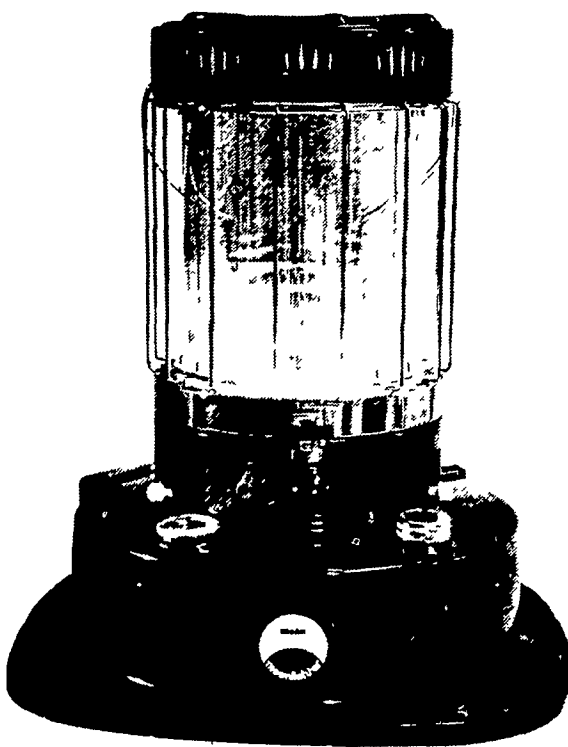
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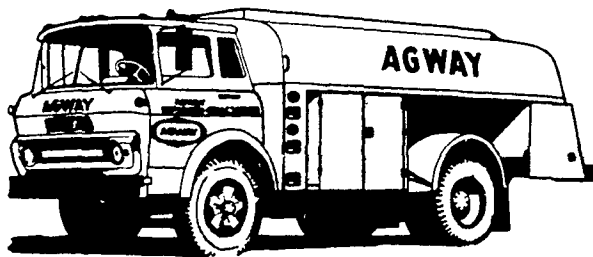
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