

McPherson suggests government prune regulations

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Gail McPherson, York County farm wife, testified April 30 during final hearings on the structure of agriculture, held at the USDA building's Jefferson Auditorium.

Representing the national coalition group, American Agri-Women, the New Park R1 fruit grower drew comparisons between the structure of agriculture, as it relates to government regulation and risk taking, and that of an unpruned tree.

"It is supporting the dead, weak, nuisance limb that do not produce fruit, and often interfere with the healthy ones," she warned. "Uncontrolled, it will grow rampant, wild, with its fruit becoming runted, scabby, insect infested, unfit for human consumption."

Part of a hearing panel, McPherson stressed that there isn't anything significantly wrong with the American agriculture structure in and of itself. Using the Food Globe designed by Agriculture Council of America, an organization to which AAW is affiliated, she showed statistics supporting that view point: only two percent of America's population produces food for which consumers spend a smaller percentage of their disposable incomes than anywhere else in the world. And to top it all, farmers produce a \$15 billion positive food trade balance along with providing U.S. with the most bountiful, highest quality food and fiber in the world.

It was the contention of this AAW leader that any structural problems that may exist in relation to agriculture and the entire free enterprise system emanate from the government, "which has allowed zealous regulators to tamper with the rights and abilities of farmers to function in the role they know best."

To support the case that adversary agencies are turning dirt farmers into paperwork farmers, McPherson listed interferences from the Department of Labor, OSHA, the Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act, Job Security Act, CETA and its "Operation Outreach", the Department of the Interior, EPA, the Bureau of Land Management, and even certain policies of the USDA.

"Because the farmer can't pass along his added costs, he becomes the ultimate consumer with ever increasing pressure from bureaucratic regulatory agencies that are forcing his costs ever higher," she stressed.

"You can loan us all the money in the world, but what good is it if we can't pay it back? And when we can't, what will become of our farms?"

The Pennsylvania peach grower and grain producer suggested that if the public at large were to be made fully aware of the burden of all regulations affecting the agricultural industry, and be allowed to assess the complex interrelationships of these regulations and

their cumulative effects on the industry, changes would surely follow.

"Until that is accomplished, only agriculture shoulders the full burden, the full risk for the price of regulation meant to take away all risk from the balance of society and itself," she contends. "If it cannot, then its structure of ownership, production, distribution and consumption is at stake, as is the entire economic structure of America it upholds."

The Agri-Woman pleaded for help to get government off farmers' backs. "Paperwork farmers won't ever be as effective as the dirt farmer," she asserted. Men and women everywhere reap the benefits of their labors, season after season in the sun. Those who don't believe that will find the habit of eating hard to break and paper a poor substitute for food."

Describing the work of the farmer pruner, she noted that he takes out all the dead limbs, the unproductive branches, the suckers which grow only upward and in-

terfere with the productive limbs. He takes a lot out of the top to let in the sun, prunes branches that go off in all directions then steps back to look at what's left.

Even if there's too much good, he clips that off, too. Then he knows he'll have a productive tree. "Government could take a lesson," McPherson chided.

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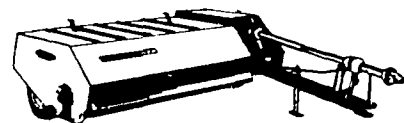
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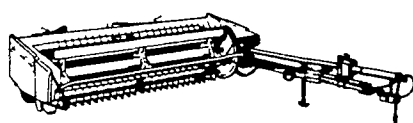
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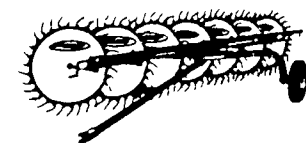
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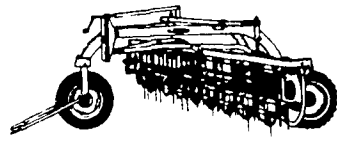


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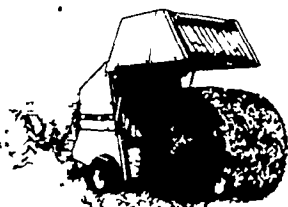


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