

Bergland interview

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mushroom imports. Is USDA going to have some role in the President's decision making process? What recommendation will you make to the President on this matter?

The Trade Commission report has been filed with USDA. We will, of course, comment on the findings and give advice to the President.

For our department it is a delicate matter. We sell much more to countries like Taiwan, Korea, and China than we import. Taiwan is a billion dollar buyer of farm exports. So is Korea. Peoples Republic of China now is a two billion dollar market.

It's a matter that has to be handled with great care. We believe an industry that has been injured by subsidized imports has a real cause for complaint.

If the Tariff Commission studies show there are subsidies involved we are going to slam down hard.

If it shows it is not a subsidized industry then it's a matter of negotiating some reasonable restraint. It would make no sense to systematically destroy a home-based industry.

Three times in this decade under three different presidents the ITC has recommended voluntary restraints of some sort. Obviously that hasn't worked or we wouldn't be discussing this.

I think if restraints are carefully negotiated and properly monitored we can learn to use them.

In the case of Mexican tomatoes we worked out an arrangement where they do not export tomatoes when the U.S. crop is in.

That's a voluntary arrangement that is working well.

Another big Pennsylvania crop is apples. USDA has made two rulings on apple sauce. One is to cut to two-thirds of previous purchases of apple sauce for school lunches.

The second is to divide such purchases into two groups: small purchases of 314,000 cases and large purchases of 458,000 cases. The latter group is open only to small business. That hurts our major markets like Knouse Co-op and Musselman's. Why is this being done?

The general purchase policy of USDA is to buy on basis of nutritional quality. On that basis apples score high...they're good food.



U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland Thursday reviewed current USDA policies on a number of matters from current crop conditions to farm research in the 1990s. Bergland told Lan-

caster Farming Editor Curt Harler during the exclusive interview that he expects passage of the new all-risk crop insurance bill this Tuesday.

Second, we buy according to price. We buy about 20 percent of the food used in the school lunch program. We think it saves taxpayers money.

It stimulates markets distressed by surpluses. And it provides the kids with a good lunch at low cost.

It may be the decision on tonnage is a function of price. The set-aside decision is deliberate.

We have constructed what we call a Small Business Set-aside Program to be sure the small, independent businessman has a chance when competing for federal business.

That is new and that is controversial—I grant that. We have reserved 60 percent of our purchase authority for what we describe as small business or small processors. Forty percent is for the large operators who historically have had the lion's share.

It's an attempt on our part to see what we can do to maintain competition in the industry and protect and

stimulate small business enterprises. Now, it may not work. I may have to give it up.

Will those small firms generate enough business to take care of the school lunch programs and to equalize a depressed market?

We'll find out. This is an experimental program. The time is open-ended.

If we don't get adequate response from the small business segment of the industry then we will have to change the rules because we are going to buy the apple sauce. We want to see the small businessman is able to compete for the federal dollar.

I'm doing this Department-wide. I do in on timber sales and other areas. In fact, the President is doing it government-wide.

You were at Seven Springs talking to ASCS officials

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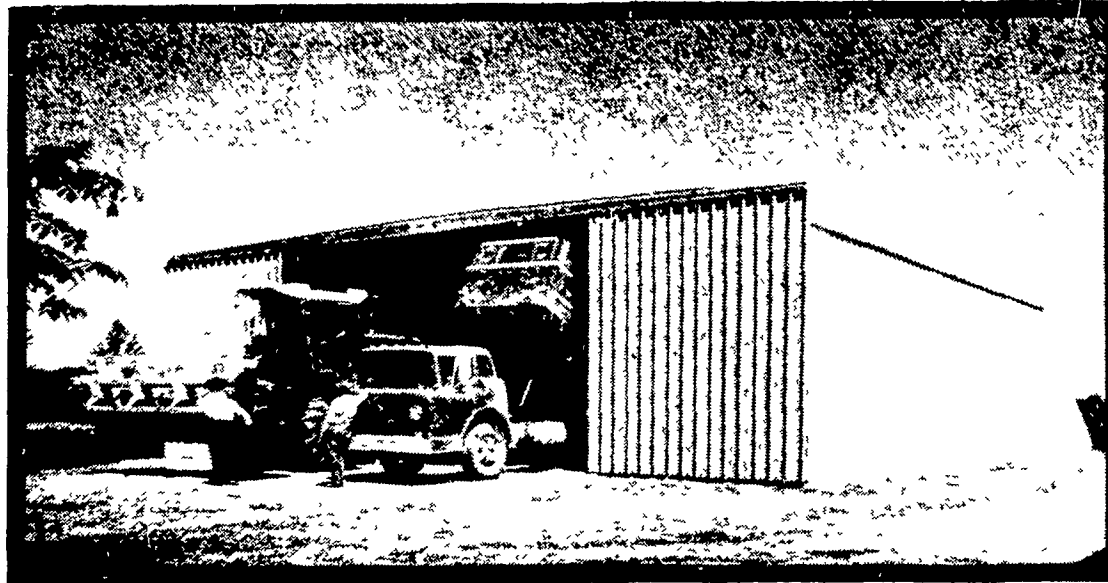
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