

USDA seeks comment on 1981 grain programs

LANCASTER — Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Jim Williams recently asked the public to comment by October 27 on proposals for the 1981 feed grain and soybean programs.

By November 15, a decision must be made on whether to offer a set-aside program or to permit farmers to be eligible for program benefits-including the reserve program-without setting aside acreage, Williams said.

In particular, Williams said, USDA is seeking comments on reserve release and call prices which are based on production costs and adjusted either by increasing the national average loan price or increasing the gap between loan and reserve prices.

Under new authorities granted under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1980, the current cost of production estimates may be considered in determining 1981 target prices. In the past, changes in target prices were based upon a formula considering only prior year's costs, Williams said.

Because of these new authorities, Williams said, USDA is asking for comments on how 1981 target prices should be adjusted from 1980 levels and whether producers

should be required to comply with established farm normal crop acreages to be eligible for full program benefits.

Williams said USDA also is asking whether barley and oats should be included in the 1981 feed grain program, and appropriate loan and purchase prices for corn, sorghum, barley, oats and rye.

In addition, public comment is requested on whether there should be a land diversion program and, if so, the size of the diversion and level of payment. Comments are also requested on limitations on planted acreage, Williams said.

If a set-aside program is implemented, USDA has discretionary authority to adjust the target price to compensate producers for participating in such a program, William said. Comments are requested on whether this authority should be used and the magnitude on any adjustment.

"Because of the relationship between soybeans and feed grains, we are also seeking public comments on appropriate loan price and purchase price levels for 1981 crop soybeans. Other determinations affecting soybeans include commodity eligibility, storage requirements and premiums and discounts," Williams said.

Related to these program decisions are determinations on the amount of the national program acreage and recommended reductions from 1980 harvested acreage for full target price protection.

Williams said while USDA is required by law to announce set-aside, national program acreage and recommended reductions in plantings decisions by November 15, the Department may announce program decisions before that time.

Before reaching any decisions, all recommendations and views will be considered along with the best data available on world and U.S. crop conditions, production and consumption prospects, he said.

Written comments will be received until October 27 by the Director, Production Adjustment Division, ASCS, USDA, Room 3630-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C., 20013. All comments will be available for public inspection during regular business hours in the Director's office.

1980 price support rates and target prices are as follows:

National Loan Rates (per bushel) Crop 1980	Target Prices (per bushel) 1980		
	Low	High	
Barley	\$1.83	2.29	\$2.55
Corn	2.25	2.50	2.35
Oats	1.16	-0-	-0-
Rye	1.91	-0-	-0-
Sorghum	2.14	2.45	2.50
Soybeans	5.02	-0-	-0-

Emergency feed payments

total \$21.2 million

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Payments to U.S. livestock producers under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's emergency feed aid program totaled \$21.2 million during the first 11 months of fiscal year 1980.

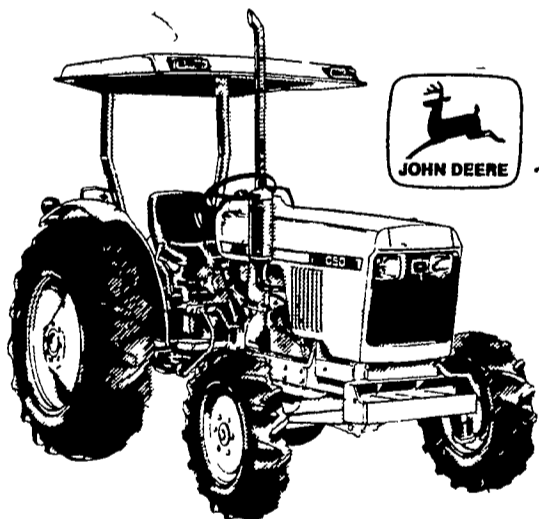
Ray Fitzgerald, administrator of the USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, said the department has approved \$25,608, or 37 percent, of the 68,329 applications requesting program aid from October 1

through August 31.

Fitzgerald said the \$21.2 million in federal assistance has helped livestock producers by 1.1 billion pounds of feed (19.6 million bushels corn equivalent).

He also said: under the emergency feed program, financial aid to farmers may be authorized when a natural disaster has reduced the amount of feed normally produced on the applicant's farm, and the applicant must make larger-than-normal purchases of feed.

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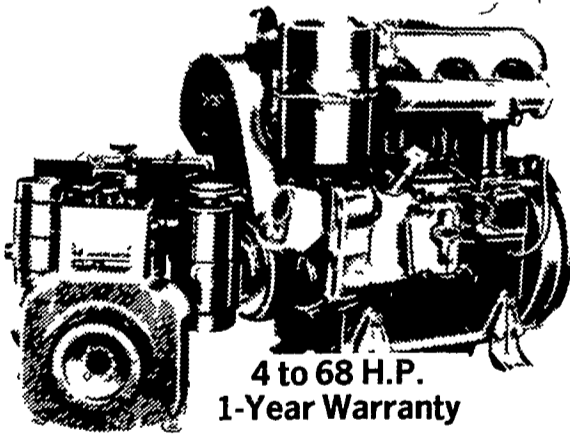
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