

Exclusive interview with Lancaster Farming

National Grange Master looks at Washington's new administration

BY CURT HARLER
CARLISLE — The new Reagan administration will bring a flock of fresh ideas and different outlooks to Washington before the month is out.

National Master Edward Andersen has a special farm-oriented view on Potomac affairs from Grange headquarters on H Street in the nation's capital. He shared some thoughts and predictions with *Lancaster Farming* in an exclusive interview last Saturday.

Inflation is the number one issue on the Grange's 1981 policy list and Andersen said

he feels the nation will see an administration pledged to control inflation.

Agriculture has been hit especially hard in recent

years because of inflation, Andersen pointed out. Farmers have a high cash input on their operations and that usually means they borrow a lot of money. Current interest rates are the highest ever. But farmers are unable to pass the added costs along to consumers. It's partly the farmer's

Supply and demand will be in

to be solved with help from strong leadership.

Leadership was the reason Andersen was in Pennsylvania. He was one of a number of top-line speakers who addressed Grange members from the Northeast at their annual leadership conference.

Commenting on the new leadership team in

Washington, Andersen noted the Reagan team is likely to be more free-enterprise oriented than Carter's cabinet. "Supply and demand will be in," he predicted.

Coupled with a strong leaning toward building foreign markets for agricultural products, Andersen said he sees better opportunity for farmers to make profits.

"There will be less government in agriculture and in our everyday life,"



Edward Andersen

Andersen said, referring to such government agencies as OSHA and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Long the target of Grange policy, the absence of government meddling in farm affairs will not be missed by this Waterloo, Nebraska farmer nor many of the Grange's members.

USDA will be less consumer-oriented, he predicted.

While there still will be a number of consumer-type programs, Andersen said he does not expect to have consumerism to the degree that it existed in the Carter Administration.

"Consumers still are the majority of voters," he admitted, "but we don't see them as deserving special attention at farmers' expense."

He said he feels both Reagan and his nominee for Agriculture Secretary, John R. Block, will move the Agriculture Department back toward farmers.

Nevertheless, Andersen admitted both he and most of the other farm organization

else to keep farmers calm. Generally it takes the form of an embargo, and they make farm groups unhappy. Grange policy opposes embargoes unless they are for reasons of national defense.

"We would support the current embargo if it were on all goods," Andersen said. "It is better than any other way, short of war, of telling the Russians we don't like what they did in Afghanistan."

What upsets Andersen is that the United States last month allowed Russia to purchase several millions of dollars worth of pipe-laying equipment.

"That is absolutely wrong," Andersen said, adding that if the purpose of an embargo is to hurt the other side then the embargo should cut across all commodities, not just food.

Reagan has said he will lift the embargo to Russia. But, Andersen pointed out, he did not say when he would lift it.

"If the embargo were not in place today the only commodity Russia could get

Embargo all commodities, not just food

leaders in Washington were surprised by Block's statement that he would use grain as a weapon for foreign policy.

"We were surprised he said it in so many words," Andersen explained. "But at least Block is willing to admit it."

Using food as a weapon is nothing new, although it usually is called something

would be wheat," Andersen said. Soybeans and feed grains would be unavailable because of a lack of supply.

Andersen maintained the embargo has had no effect on grain prices since July when the impact of the nationwide drought first was felt.

"If it were not for the grain reserve we have now, with

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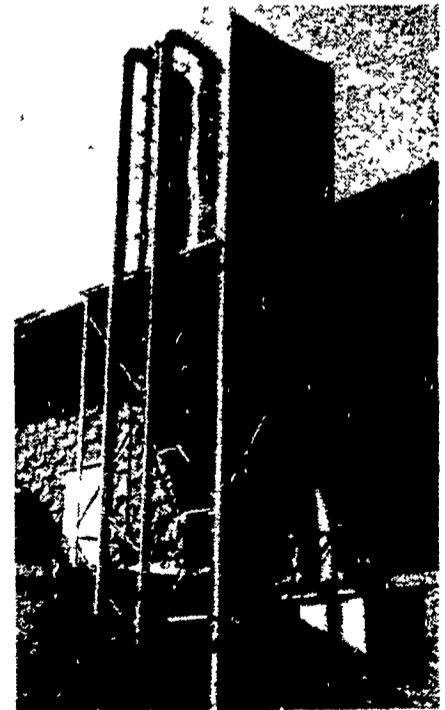
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