

Reagan says 'no' to meat import quotas

WASHINGTON, D.C. — March 3 Secretary of Agriculture John Block announced last week that President Reagan will not impose quotas on meat imports during the second quarter of this year, and predicted quotas would not be necessary for the rest of 1981.

Block said the U.S. Department of agriculture's second quarterly estimate of 1981 U.S. meat imports indicates the United States will import 1.402 billion pounds of meat covered by the Meat Import Act of 1979.

This act requires the president to restrict imports of certain meats — primarily beef and veal — if USDA estimates imports of those meats will equal or exceed 110 percent of a stated level.

"Based on today's estimate, there is no need to impose import restrictions during the quarter beginning April 1," Block said. "Our analysis of conditions in this

country and abroad affecting meat imports strongly suggests there will be no need for import restrictions for the remainder of the year."

USDA makes a new estimate of meat imports before each calendar quarter. For 1981, quotas would be required if imports are estimated to equal or exceed 1.447 billion pounds. The USDA estimate released today is 45 million pounds below that level, Block said.

Last November, USDA estimated 1.458 billion pounds of meat would be imported in 1981. This estimate was 11 million pounds above the trigger level.

On November 28, former President Carter announced his intention to implement — and then suspend — meat import limitations under provisions in the law. A 30-day public comment period was provided in accordance with the

act.

While the comments were being reviewed and analyzed, first by the Carter administration and then by the current administration, USDA received new data on the effects of the drought in Australia. These data indicated a substantial reduction in the export availability of beef from that country during 1981.

Australia normally supplies the United States with about half the imported meat subject to the act. Although a drought was in progress in Australia at the time of the first estimate, its impact on production and exports was more severe than earlier forecast, further depleting stock inventory levels in 1981, Block said.

Despite some rain during

December through February, rangeland conditions, particularly over the central and southeastern cattle producing areas, are still generally in only fair to poor condition, Block said.

Also, he said, lower U.S. prices, higher interest rates and a strong Australian dollar further reduced incentives to produce meat exports for the U.S. market.

Consider earth terraces

CHAMBERSBURG — "County farmers have an important tool available for controlling cropland erosion," reports Charles Worrilow, soil conservationist for Chambersburg Soil Conservation Service.

"Earth terraces on sloping farmland will catch runoff water and slow it down, reducing the movement of soil off the field. In addition to conserving soil, herbicides and fertilizers are kept in place and soil moisture is maintained, increasing crop yields", says Worrilow

An earth terrace is a channel across the slope which intercepts rainfall and snow melt and directs

it to a safe outlet. On slopes of less than 8 percent, terraces are constructed so modern farm machinery can operate over the entire terrace with no loss of cropland.

On slopes over 8 percent, terraces are constructed with an unfarmable backslope kept in grass. Crop acreage losses with this type terrace are offset by increased yields due to soil, herbicide, fertilizer, and water savings.

For more information on conservation terraces, contact the local Soil Conservation Service office.



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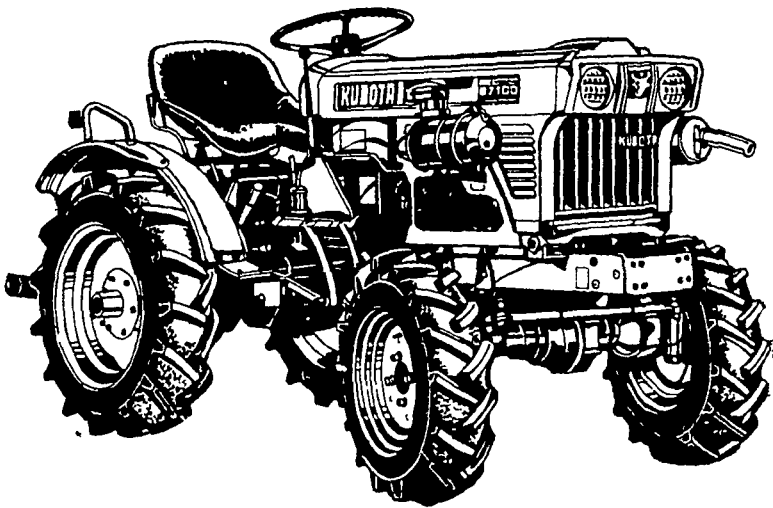
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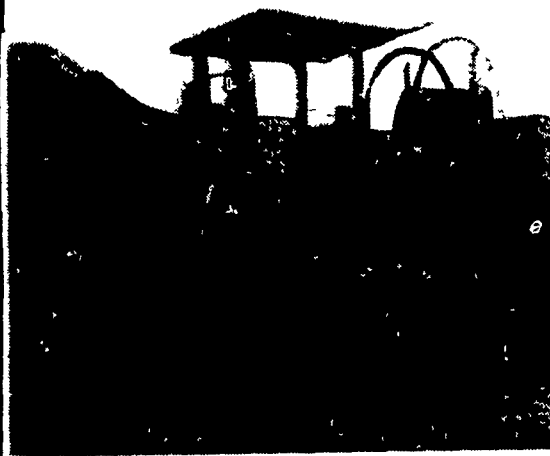


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