

Nat'l grange Master critiques Reagan Administration

SPOKANE, Wash. — During his annual Master's address here Monday before delegates and officers of the National Grange, Edward Andersen, said he hopes the "buy now and pay later with cheaper dollars" philosophy will go by the wayside under the Reagan administration.

Andersen said there is a new environment in the nation's capital and praised the President's efforts in leading the country toward a goal of fiscal responsibility. Recognizing that inflation is the country's number one problem, he said agriculture producers are particularly vulnerable because they are unable to pass on increased production costs to the price of the commodities they produce.

This year farmers had abundant harvests in almost all major crops yet suffered a drop in most farm commodity prices. Andersen feels politics was largely responsible for the decrease in net farm income. He said political decisions such as the Russian grain embargo, low support levels in the 1981 Farm

Act, non-action on high interest rates, refusal to allow CCC butter sales to certain foreign countries and an untimely tax cut have a drastic effect on farm commodity prices and production costs.

Andersen disagreed with the timing of President Reagan's tax cut package which went into effect Oct. 1. He wanted the budget balanced before a tax cut was adopted. He said the tax cut is partly responsible for continuing high interest rates which are devastating to agriculture producers and most businesses. The availability of credit at a reasonable rate is essential to growth and expansion. Andersen said credit used for production and expansion is not the type of credit that causes inflation.

The national farm leader stressed the need for increased agricultural exports citing the PL 480 and Foreign Agriculture Service programs as being successful in helping develop foreign markets. Andersen also strongly encouraged financial support for agriculture research to insure

Americans a continued adequate supply of high quality food at reasonable prices.

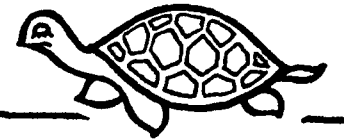
He criticized the Administration's dairy price support program of once a year price adjustment and allowing parity to fall below 70 percent, with a minimum of \$13.10 per cwt of milk containing 3.67 percent butterfat under certain conditions. He said these are drastic measures which will create severe economic hardships for dairy producers and cause many of them to cease production resulting in higher consumer prices in the future.

Andersen said as the world demand for food increases and new land is brought into production, a high percentage of this land will require an increased amount of intensified land treatment to conserve the soil and water. He said retaining top soil is an ab-

solute necessity if U.S. farmers are to maintain and increase their levels of productivity. He said every American should have an interest in the conservation of soil and water and be expected to help pay for responsible programs through their federal, state and local governments.

Grain elevator bankruptcies have been hurting grain producers for many years. Andersen said all states should review their regulations for licensing of warehousing particularly in the areas of more frequent and independent C.P.A. audits and stronger financial statement requirements.

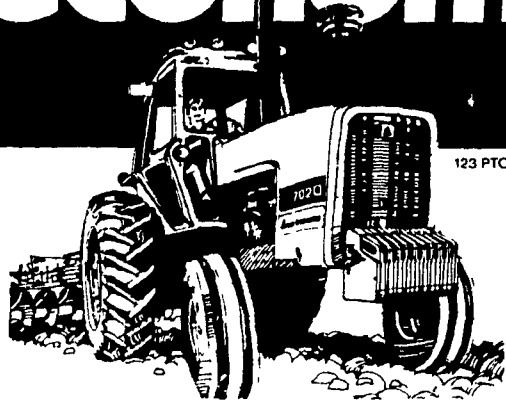
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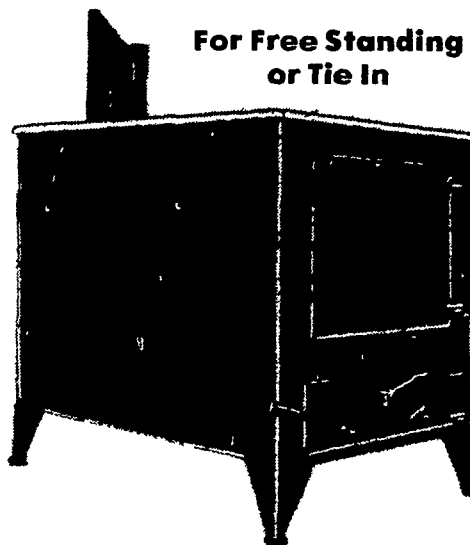
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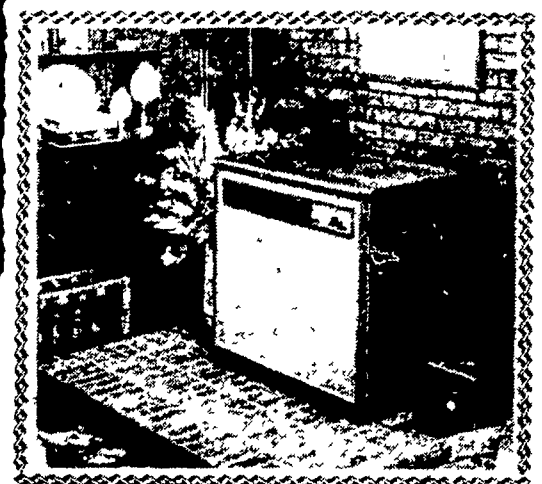
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