

Stone announces nationwide Farmers' Union membership drive

PASCO Wash. — Declaring that need has never been greater for farmers to work to expand their political clout through their farm organizations, George W. Stone, president of the National Farmers Union, announced last Wednesday that the Farmers Union has launched a nationwide membership campaign aimed at adding several thousand new members to the organization's ranks in the coming year.

Speaking to the annual convention of the Oregon-Washington Farmers Union here, Stone said "Those who contend that farm organizations are dead or ineffective or not needed are themselves dead wrong."

"If you take an honest look at the world economy and at our nation's agricultural economy, it quickly becomes clear that we must have a change in the direction of our farm policies. Farm organizations have a tough but vital job ahead of them. They must have strong support from farmers at the grass roots level," Stone said.

"Get the government out of

agriculture was the line many were preaching in recent years. Now they, and unfortunately all of the rest of us in agriculture, are feeling the results of their shallow philosophy. We haven't had an effective farm program in years and the result is continued low prices and mounting surpluses. Those who backed tight credit and high interest rate policies failed to comprehend the heavily unequal impact they have on farmers.

"When you consider the fact that one third of the products farmers produce in this country goes for export, it becomes obvious that farmers are vulnerable to nearly all of political and economic whims of change that take place throughout the world."

Farmers must have strong organizations representing them to bring about the public policies that will keep their industry on sound economic footing, Stone said. "That's why we're asking Farmers Union members throughout the country to reach out to their farm neighbors, to tell them about our goals and policies, and to

convince them of the importance that they join our efforts."

"We may not be able to put together the 'big money' lobbying effort that other industries and groups have," the Farmers Union leader said, "but we can put together a 'people' lobbying effort with the power to beat the odds against us if we have members who are forceful and active in working for our cause."


"United and Strong — Farmers Union" is the theme of the campaign. Door to door membership drives by local Farmers Union members will be taking place throughout the winter in nearly every state where Farmers Union is organized.

Stone expressed optimism for the chances of a sizeable increase in membership and for implementing Farmers Union policies.

"We are seeing more and more of the leaders of farm, agribusiness, church and other rural organizations talk about the need for policies that Farmers Union has always stood for — for a

federal farm program with adequate incentives for farmers to join to stabilize supplies and maintain fair farm prices, for credit for agriculture at reasonable interest rates, for unrestricted and unmanipulated exports, and for conservation and preservation of our land and the family farm system," he observed. "The time is ripe," Stone told the

Farmers Union members, "not only for us to gain new members, but also to win new friends and carry out beneficial dialogue with other groups. Together we must see to it that government is no longer seen as the enemy of agriculture but as a true partner working to keep our industry healthy and productive."



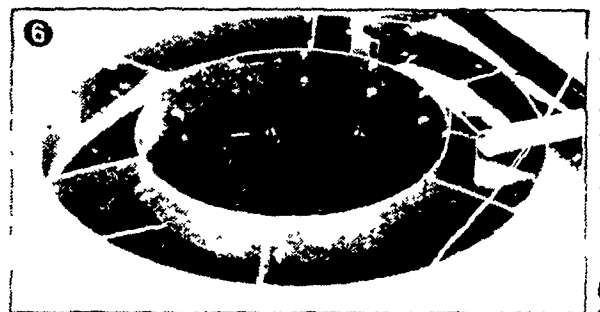
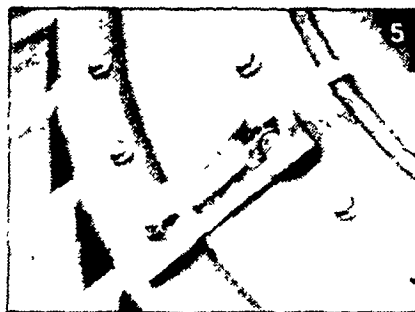
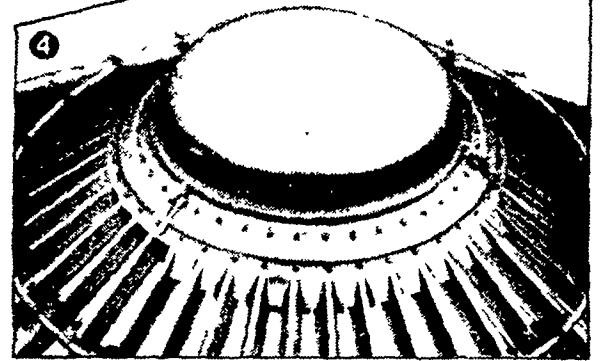
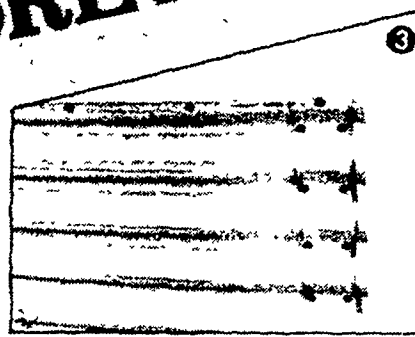
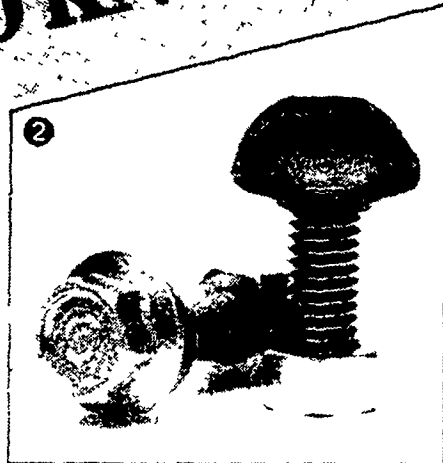
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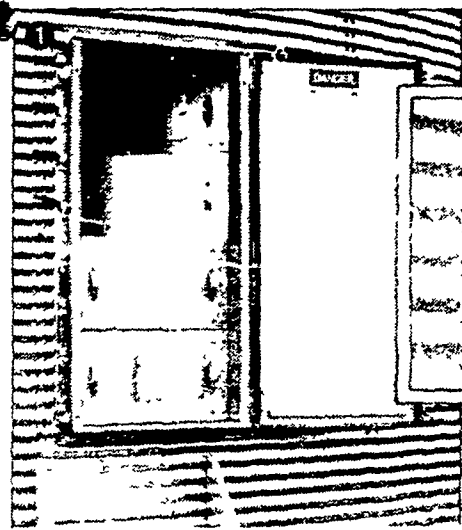
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