

Senate group reports farm program changes

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Senate Agricultural Committee has ordered reported to the Senate legislation to improve the basic farm programs, provide additional export and drought assistance, and reduce the cost to the taxpayers of the farm commodity programs.

The bill makes changes in the wheat program for 1984 and 1985, freezes the target price in 1985 at the 1984 level for feed grains, cotton, and rice, and requires an additional \$250 million to be used for direct economic emergency disaster loans in fiscal year 1984. Administration officials, as part of the agreement, also agreed to seek additional funding for P.L. 480 and GSM-5 export funds. The total package will save \$3.2 billion over four years.

The bill makes the following changes in law:

Wheat

— Provides for a target price of \$4.38 per bushel in 1984 and 1985, instead of the \$4.45 and \$4.65 called for in current law.

— For the 1984 and 1985 crops, provides for a 10 percent paid diversion with 50 percent of the payment to be made at the time of signup and a payment rate of \$2.70 per bushel.

— For both crop years, provides for a 20 percent acreage reduction program with no payment.

— Provides for a 10 to 20 percent payment-in-kind diversion program for the 1984 crop with compensation based on 85 percent of the farm program yield.

Feed Grains

— Freezes the target price for corn at \$3.03 per bushel for the 1985 program, instead of the \$3.18 in current law.

— For the 1985 crop, provides that if feed grain carry-over on October 1, 1984, exceeds 1.1 billion bushels, the Secretary shall provide for a total acreage cutback of 5 to 20 percent, through a combination acreage reduction program (ARP) and a paid diversion. Not less than 5 percent of the acreage cutback would be achieved through a paid diversion and any reduction over 15 percent would be equally divided between paid diversion and ARP.

— Provides for 50 percent of the diversion payment to be made at the time of signup and for a payment rate of \$1.50 per bushel.

Haying and Grazing

— The bill permits haying and grazing of acreage diverted from production under the 1984 wheat program at the option of each State. It authorizes the Secretary to permit haying and grazing of diverted acres under the 1985 wheat program, but permits each State to decide whether to permit

haying and grazing in the State if it is authorized by the Secretary.

Emergency Assistance

— The bill requires the Secretary to make Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) natural disaster emergency loans available based on individual production loss for producers whose operations are located in counties contiguous to counties that have been designated as eligible for disaster assistance.

— It also permits natural disaster emergency loan applications to be filed within 8

months of the disaster or the disaster declaration. It permits the valuation of farm assets to be used as collateral for emergency loans to be based on the value of those assets one year before the date of the disaster declaration if that value is higher than the current value.

— Regarding funds for the economic emergency loan program during fiscal year 1984, it requires at least \$310 million be made available for insured economic emergency loans, and gives the Secretary additional discretion to make additional

amounts available in order to achieve the goals of the program.

— Raises the loan limit on insured operating loans to farmers from \$100,000 to \$200,000, and guaranteed loans from \$200,000 to \$400,000.

— Provides additional authorities to FmHA in order to give borrowers who refinance loans better rates and terms.

— Ensures that at least 20 percent of the farm ownership and annual operating loans go to farmers who most need this assistance, and provides loans at subsidized interest rates.

Nation's dairy leaders to attend UDIA's annual meeting

TOWSON, Md. — More than 500 dairy leaders will attend the 14th annual meeting of the United Dairy Industry Association (UDIA), March 30-31, in San Antonio, Texas. Dairy producers, processors/handlers, equipment/supply manufacturers, and organization personnel will participate in the two-day meeting at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio.

The purpose of the annual

meeting, held every spring, is to present stewardship reports on UDIA promotional programs to the organization's House of Delegates. Programs approved at last fall's House of Delegates meeting will be previewed. These include "REAL" Seal sweepstakes campaign for June Dairy Month and plans for a fall Cheese Jamboree.

Locally promotion programs are conducted by the Advertising and Promotion Agency/Middle Atlantic Milk Marketing Area. The Agency will be sending eight representatives of the region's milk marketing cooperatives as delegates to UDIA's annual meeting.

UDIA's total promotion program includes advertising and marketing services, nutrition research and education programs, and product and process research and development projects. Education seminars covering these and other program areas will be conducted on March 30 and 31.

Associated Milk Producers, Inc. (Southern Region), Arlington, Texas, one of 20 UDIA member organizations, will act as host for the meeting. Based in Rosemont, Illinois, UDIA is the nation's largest dairy promotion organization, representing about 94 percent of the country's dairy farmers and 85 percent of the milk marketed.

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