

GOP told to pay attention to NE farming

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Billions of dollars in jobs and commerce generated by agriculture in the Northeast is at risk unless the nation's policy makers pay some attention to it.

That was the theme of a statement made to the Republican Party Platform Committee in Dallas on Monday, Aug. 13 by Clyde E. Rutherford, a dairy farmer of Otego, N.Y. Rutherford is President of Dairylea Cooperative, Chairman of the Northeast Dairy Cooperative, Coordinating Committee and Chairman of the New York State Dairy Industry Communications Committee. He was invited to Dallas by the Committee to discuss the needs and problems of Northeastern agriculture.

"There is a growing and increasingly vocal resentment expressed in the Northeast over the fact that agriculture is the largest single industry by far in this part of the country but few people, other than farmers, farm leaders and agricultural economists, seem to be aware of that fact," said Rutherford. "Neither is there any apparent recognition by the candidates of either party that

Northeast agriculture, faced with some of the highest costs in the country...is slowly but surely being financially squeezed to the point of no return. This is particularly true of dairy, but it is also true for many crop growers."

Rutherford warned that failure of Republicans to publicly acknowledge the increasingly severe pressures on Northeast agriculture by imported Canadian products...many of them subsidized...would "raise serious doubt about rural support in traditionally Republican areas." Farm and agri-business related families may not, he indicated, change their party, but "they could very well not vote at all."

The dairy leader urged that the party platform "contain a clear and specific recognition of the fact that only two percent of the U.S. population are responsible for feeding themselves and the other ninety-eight percent." He said that the platform should impose on the party a mandate to "set long-range policies that will assure an abundance of food for the foreseeable future."

Rutherford cited the dairy industry as an example of the nation

playing "Russian roulette" with its food supply.

"We have set in motion a program to reduce milk production that is working. Furthermore, the cost of the program (milk diversion payments) is being 100% paid out of the pockets of dairy farmers themselves. It sounds good...but what are the long range effects? No one knows...and economists are notoriously wrong when they try for long range predictions about the dairy industry."

Rutherford suggested that the Platform Committee should adopt an agricultural policy which: 1) recognizes the critical dependence of our population on the 2% who operate our farms; 2) calls for programs and policies that will assure a long term continuation of the present agricultural abundance in the U.S.; 3) requires U.S. trade policy be based on fair and economically sound trade relationships, including protection of American agriculture on the same basis as domestic agriculture is protected in other nations; 4) renounces export embargos EXCEPT where the health and welfare of the American public may be

jeopardized; 5) calls for maintenance of food reserves to level out the effects of a widespread drought or other adverse conditions; 6) requires the setting up of a comprehensive "early warning" system that monitors from government and private sources the rate of sellouts, bankruptcies, loan delinquencies, and other signs that indicate a further reduction in America's agricultural enterprise.

"We've reached 2% feeding 98%," said Rutherford. "Do we want to gamble that 1% or less can do the job? Will we forever complain about the costs of agricultural programs and continue to ignore the benefits? Today's surpluses will disappear like snow in August if we experience any widespread poor weather. Let's have policies that will protect the public against potential disaster."

Siegel heads poultry science

UNIVERSITY PARK — Herbert S. Siegel was named head of Penn State's Department of Poultry Science, effective July 1. He replaces Kenneth Goodwin, who retired with emeritus status after serving in the position for 17 years.

As department head Siegel is responsible for providing programs in resident education, research and Extension. "Within the coming year, I hope to extend our relationship with the poultry industry," says Siegel, "and to attract more research support from government, as well."

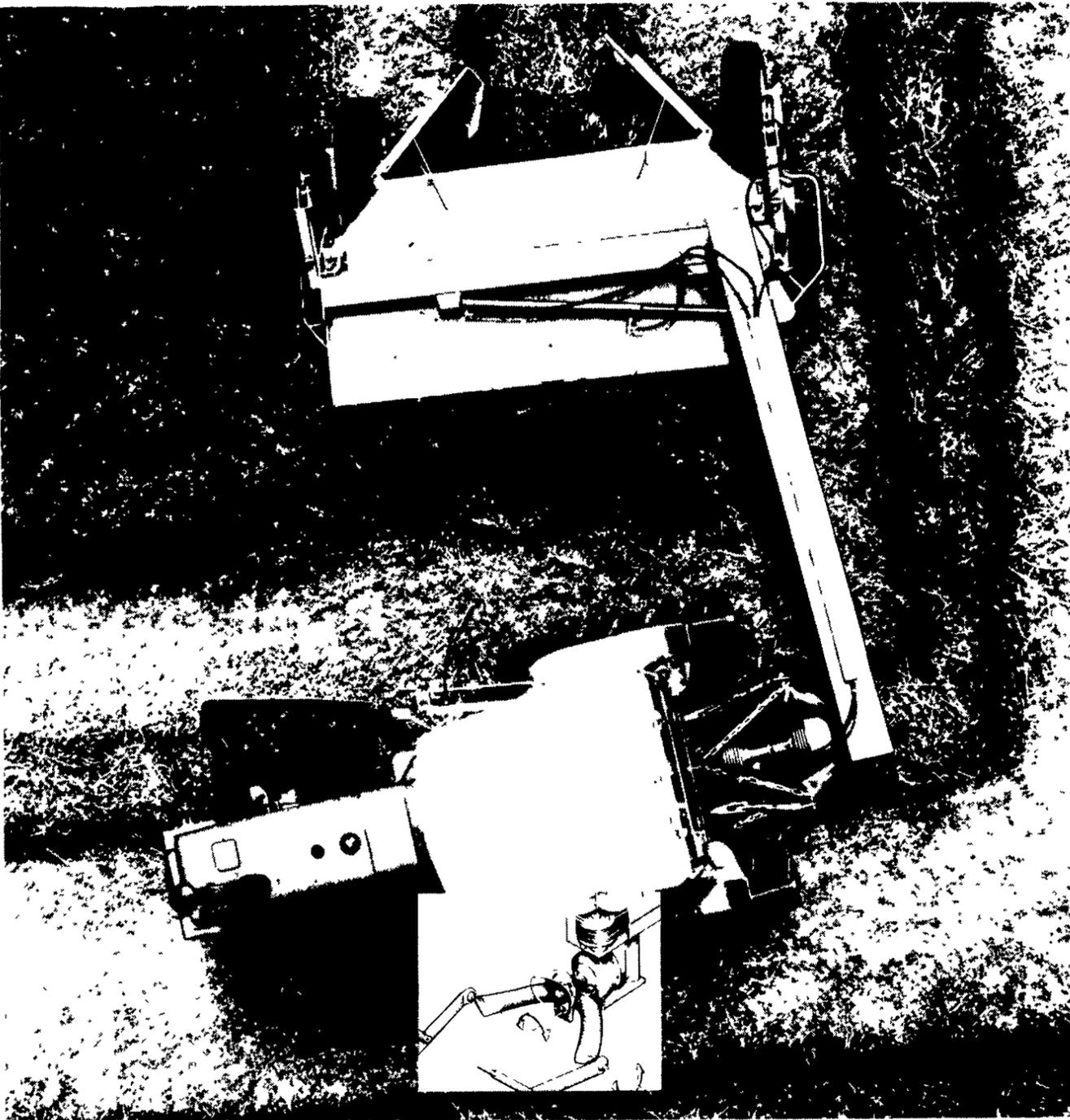


Herbert S. Siegel

Before accepting the position with Penn State, Siegel served as supervisory research physiologist for the Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory in Athens, Ga. The laboratory is affiliated with the USDA-Agricultural Research Station.

During his career, Siegel has been a convention speaker in Europe and Australia as well as in the United States. His topics have ranged from Environmental Stress and Animal Health to "Immunobiology." In 1980, he conducted six symposia-seminars for graduate students, faculty and research personnel at the Agricultural University, Wageningen, Netherlands.

Siegel holds three degrees from Penn State, where he completed his Ph.D. in poultry science in 1959. He has authored or co-authored more than 180 publications and is a member of many professional societies, including the World's Poultry Science Association, American Society of Zoologists, New York Academy of Science, and American Association for the Advancement of Science. He is currently editor-in-chief of Poultry Science journal.



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