

Grange proposes new action to address debt problem

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The governing board of the nation's farm organization, the National Grange, today urged Congress to move promptly to stem the increasing incidence of farmers unable to obtain credit to plant their 1985 crops. The action came in response to growing criticism among the farm financial community that the Reagan Administration's announced farm credit package is insufficient to keep many farm families from bankruptcy.

In a letter to Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, National Grange Master Edward Andersen called for an increase from \$650 million to \$3 billion the amount available for Farmers Home Administration loan guarantees, for Congress to provide \$100 million for matching funds for private lenders to aid in an interest rate "buy-down" program, for elimination of all requirements that lenders forgive a portion of interest or principal in order to qualify for the FmHA loan guarantees, and for "targeting" or focusing this lending assistance to farmers and ranchers who market up to a maximum of \$200,000 in gross sales per year.

Andersen's letter points out that

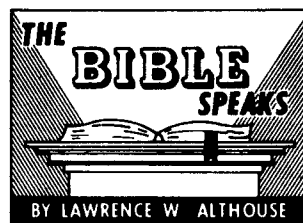
farmers and ranchers have borne the burden for the nation's reduced inflation picture in the past months. "The American farmer is paying for the lower inflation rate through high real interest rates on long term debt and by a drastic decline in asset values," Andersen noted. The decline in asset values, particularly for land and machinery, has eliminated many farmers' main source of collateral against which loans were made for crop planting.

The Grange, representing nearly 400,000 members, is also concerned with the well-being of the farm communities which rely on farm income to purchase goods and services. Andersen warns that unless means are found to aid financially distressed farmers, "thousands upon thousands of medium-to moderate-size family farmers will be gone from rural America and with them the economic structure that sustains rural communities."

The Grange's credit proposal goes far beyond that announced by President Reagan shortly before the November election and further refined by Agriculture Secretary John Block earlier this month. "The funding levels in the Administration's plan are far from adequate to meet the immediate needs," Andersen said, "and it is so

encumbered with administrative and procedural requirements that our planting season could come and go before its effects can be seen." Andersen points to the Grange's historical support for the moderate scale producers and suggests that limits to the loan amounts must be incorporated into any effective credit package. "We don't want to see a credit program hastily written that bails out the corporate speculative landowner leaving the family producers to fall by the wayside," Andersen remarked.

The \$100 million for interest buy-down would be available only to commercial and cooperative lenders who also agree to sustain a similar amount of reduced income. For example, Andersen explained, "If in order to keep a farmer in business his interest must be reduced by four percent, the lender would receive half of that loss in interest income from the U.S. Treasury." The Grange feels this program is essential to accommodate the credit needs of family agriculture this crop season. Andersen concluded, "We further hope that Congress and the Reagan Administration will reassess its farm lending programs keeping in mind the long term financial well-being of moderate scale family farmers."



ON RECOGNIZING HIS DISCIPLES
March 3, 1985

Background Scripture:
John 13.

Devotional Reading:
John 15:11-17.

The hour of twelve midnight has come and gone. The house is silent except for my stereo turned down low and the noise of my typewriter. I'm burning the proverbial "midnight oil" because I have a deadline to meet and there were not enough hours in the day.

Although both my mind and body yearn for the warmth and comfort of my bed, I turn to the assigned scriptural passage for the week and begin to read the familiar words of John 13. Yet, even though I've read these words many times before, something not new, but at least newly urgent leaps out at me from the printed page:

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (13:35).

STABBED BY WORDS

Suddenly, that which began as the task of finding something to say to you has become an experience in which God has managed once again to say something to me. The words stab me as an accusation: "How many people know that I am a disciple of Christ because they witness the love I bear for others?"

I would like to think that somewhere along the way there have been a few who saw me at

work or play and discerned enough love in what I did and said and was to determine that I am a follower of the Jesus Christ—but I'm not so sure. And you? Do not those words of our Lord stab you a little too?

In fact, I'm not at all sure that love plays much of a role in identifying Christians in our world today. When Christians "make the news" today, it seldom seems to have anything to do with love. Conflict, yes— "CHURCH SPLIT BY LEGAL DISPUTE." AND disagreement— "CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERAL CHURCHMEN CLASH." Even violence: "PROTESTANT GROUP AMBUSHES CATHOLICS IN BELFAST." "But, love? Not too often. Not often enough."

MASTERS AND SERVANTS
I'm not suggesting that Christians are never known by their love or that all conflict between Christ's disciples is necessarily evil. What I'm feeling at this moment is that there just isn't enough love anywhere to fulfill Christ's command to "love one another." Not in me and not in many like me.

And just in case the words themselves might not sink in as they should, Jesus puts it into a picture which none of us can fail to comprehend or forget: "...he began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded" (13:5).

Peter protests—as we too would be likely to do—for it is unseemingly that he, our Lord and Master, should wash *our* feet. But, unlike many of us, Jesus never felt diminished by assuming the role of servant. His dignity, his pride were not taken away by humbling himself. And thus was he able to do humble acts of love—and challenge us to do so as well. And know this: both he and the world are watching.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Broadcast Legumes

Alfalfa and red clover growers who are planning to broadcast the seed into a stand of winter wheat or barley should be preparing their seed now. Research and experience have both proven that early March seeding will give the best results. It's the time of year when the ground freezes and thaws frequently, creating a "honeycomb" condition to the top soil. This is an excellent way to give the seeds a light covering of top soil. If the broadcast seeding is made in late March, this condition may not prevail.

The seeds should be of top quality and be inoculated with legume bacteria before seeding.

To Attend Poultry Progress Day

The third annual Poultry Progress Day will be held on Thursday, March 7, in the auditorium at the Farm and Home Center, Lancaster. The program will start at 9 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. Lunch will be available. An excellent program has been developed by the Poultry Association Education Committee. Speakers will deal with "Management For Profits;"

"Working With Your Banker;" "Proper Egg Handling;" "Working With Your Serviceman;" "Fly Control;" "Marketing Order Update;" "Poultry Health and Disease Surveillance;" and the important area of "How Agriculture Affects Water Quality."

We encourage poultry producers and people interested in the poultry industry to take the time to attend this important meeting.

To Apply Manure

This is the season of the year that a lot of manure is applied in preparation for corn planting. We need to be concerned with proper application of liquid or solid manure in such a way as to minimize odors and avoid pollution complaints.

Application should be made from mid-morning to mid-afternoon to allow maximum odor dispersion and manure drying before the calm, night time hours when neighbors are home from work. Fields for disposal should be downwind, rather than upwind from neighbors.

Whenever possible the manure should be plowed under or disked into the soil as soon as possible after spreading. This practice not

only minimizes odors but also preserves nutrients and reduces potential for surface run-off that causes water contamination.

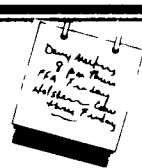
To Mend Pasture Fences

Pastures can provide cattle a lot of good, nutritious forage, and it's a place for them to get fresh air, exercise and sunlight. Before too long, we will be turning our cattle out to pasture, but let's not turn them out too soon. It's best to let the sod develop and the ground firm up. Spend the time now to fix fences and pick up trash and debris before the grass gets too tall and before you're tied down with spring field work.

It might also be helpful to section off the pasture in order to make best use of the grass. For example, wet areas and flat areas may be fenced off from other areas. This will enable you to keep cows out of wet areas until the ground firms up, and could help prevent the development of foot problems. During the early spring flush of pasture growth, you could keep cattle out of the flat area; save it for hay, and feed it to the cows later in the summer.

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Farm Calendar



Monday, March 4

Lancaster Dairy Days at the Farm and Home Center, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Mid-Atlantic Workshop for Disabled Individuals and Their Families in Rural and Agricultural Communities, Salisbury Civic Center, Salisbury, Md. Continues tomorrow.

Annual Forage and Grassland Conference, Hershey Convention Center. Continues through Wednesday.

Wednesday, March 6

Pa. Potato Growers Institute, Sheraton Inn, State College. Continues tomorrow.

Lancaster Conservation District monthly board meeting at the Farm and Home Center, 7:30 p.m.

Bucks-Montgomery County No-till Conference, Creamery, Pa.
Lancaster Poultry Progress Day, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Farm and Home Center.

Friday, March 8

Dairy Breeders Institute, Farm and Home Center

Sunday, March 10

Farm Credit annual meeting, Williamsburg; continues through Tuesday.

Monday, March 11

National Food Policy Conference in Washington, D.C. at Mayflower Hotel. Continues tomorrow.

Tuesday, March 12

Swine Management Conference at Penn State University.

Wednesday, March 13

Adams County Water Quality Fair, Bowen Auditorium, Gettysburg College, 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Thursday, March 14

Wayne County Dairy Day, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Wayne County Veteran's Memorial Armory.
York County Potato Grower's Meeting, Centre Presbyterian Church, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Friday, March 15

Pa. Ayrshire Breeder's Association annual meeting, Holiday Inn, Grantville.

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Tons of hazardous pesticides, paints, cleaners and solvents stored in basements and garages may be the country's biggest hidden pollution problem, says International Wildlife magazine. A regional government agency in Seattle estimates there are more than 100,000 pounds of the banned pesticide DDT stored in the Seattle suburbs alone. Some 25 states are setting up toxic waste collection points to help combat this problem.

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