

Block proposes 20 million acre cropland reduction

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block recently proposed the largest single soil conservation initiative in the history of American agriculture — a 10-year, \$11 billion conservation reserve which would take up to 20 million acres of highly erodible cropland out of production.

"Nothing in this nation is more precious than the natural resources which produce our food and fiber," Block said. "Yet, we have been compelled to work with farm programs which encourage production on land that should never have seen the blade of a plow."

"I am asking Congress to join me in seriously addressing the problem by including this proposal

in the 1985 farm bill," Block added. "I should also point out that this proposal is consistent with my strong support for a sodbuster provision in the farm bill which would make producers ineligible for federal farm program benefits if they produce crops on highly erodible land."

Under the proposal, the Department of Agriculture and participating farmers would share the cost of planting protective grass or trees on eligible land. At least 10 percent of the reserve would be earmarked for tree planting and maintenance. "I'm looking to have somewhere in the neighborhood of one billion trees planted on this land, and that has to make a great difference in our ability to protect this soil," Block

said.

Conservation reserve payments made to the farmers would provide a modest level of income support during the 10-year transition from row crop farming to other enterprises, Block added.

Block said the reserve would reduce soil erosion on land which is enrolled in the program by nearly 20 tons an acre yearly. Also, a successful program would improve water quality, curb production of surplus commodities and thus help increase commodity prices received by farmers. Other environmental benefits would include better habitat for fish and wildlife and reduced sedimentation in streams and along roads.

USDA studies show that one out of every eight acres of cropland in

the U.S. — 53 million acres of a total 421 million acres of cropland — would be eligible for the reserve.

Block said the proposed reserve is consistent with his overall thrust towards developing a long-term agricultural policy and would help bring greater consistency between the conservation and commodity programs.

"While the gross outlays for the reserve would be about \$11 billion over 10 years, it's important to point out that they will be offset to a large degree by reduced outlays for annual loans, deficiency payments and storage costs under existing commodity programs," Block said. "We should also keep

in mind that this is re-prioritizing existing funds. I strongly believe it is far better to use this money for conservation than on annual acreage reduction programs."

Other details of the proposal include:

- Farmers would submit bids on the cost-share payments they would accept and the amount of acreage to be enrolled.

- Grazing and harvesting hay on reserve lands would be prohibited.

- No producer would receive more than \$50,000 in reserve payments yearly.

- No more than 25 percent of the cultivated cropland in a county could be enrolled in the reserve.

Computer users groups

LANCASTER — A computer users' group show will be held Sept. 28 in the Park City Mall in Lancaster. Groups interested in participating in the show should

contact either David Stroup 426-3346 (evenings) or Jim Godfrey 687-0237 (evenings) as soon as possible.



Dairymen, INC. Mini-Walk

Bruce Savage (center), star defender for the Baltimore Blast professional indoor soccer team, visited and signed autographs for the 200 children and parents who participated in the March of Dimes Mini-Walk held recently at the Baltimore Zoo. The Middle Atlantic Division of Dairymen, Inc. and WBEF-TV co-sponsored the event. Dairymen provided participants with samples of the new Ultra-High Temperature (UHT) milk and "Milk-America's Health Kick" posters. The walkers collected more than \$2000 for March of Dimes.

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The AER-WAY was developed in New Zealand primarily for pasture renovation. It consists of rugged tubular steel frame which incorporates a weight box and tined rollers set into bearing blocks which can be offset. The rollers are ground driven (power is not PTO supplied) and penetration is determined by the addition of weight. It can be used in place of an aerator, rotovator, rotary hoe, disc, cultivator and roller.

What does the "AER-WAY" do?

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- The AER-WAY has only one moving part, therefore maintenance costs are low.
- The AER-WAY is not dragged through the soil, therefore horsepower requirements and associated fuel costs are low.

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- The AER-WAY tines are high strength, induction hardened steel forgings for maximum life.

EASY MAINTENANCE

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