

NFO meetings seek action to 'cash flow' agriculture

CORNING, IA — DeVon Woodland, president of the National Farmers Organization, announced today that he is inviting

farmers, ranchers, agricultural lenders, and rural business people to a series of strategy and action

meetings to be held in 11 states in August.

Woodland said the series of "Meetings for Action to Cash Flow Agriculture" will begin Aug. 5 with a Minnesota meeting in Owatonna. He said NFO members will urge farmers and ranchers from all farm organizations to join them at the meetings.

Other meetings scheduled are Fargo, N.D. on Aug. 8; Sioux Falls, S.D. on Aug. 9; Lincoln, Neb. on Aug. 13; Louisville, Ky. on Aug. 15; Edwardsville, Ill. on Aug. 16; Marshalltown, Iowa on Aug. 20, and Burlington, Vt. on Aug. 21. Others will be announced within a few days.

At these meetings, Woodland said, NFO leaders will present a plan to push farm prices high enough to make it possible to cash flow agriculture. All producers are on "the same sinking ship," he said, and an agriculture-wide effort is needed to turn the situation around.

"There is enough money in the marketplace to pay agriculture's bills and retire its debts but farmers and ranchers will have to go after it," he said. "We can reverse the trend toward lower prices and return prosperity to agriculture if we focus in together on the marketing system."

Woodland noted that the economic situation in agriculture is deteriorating rapidly. He said he is particularly disturbed by statements claiming agriculture is in transition and that farmers and ranchers will have to adapt to lower farm prices.

"The transition we are being asked to accept is the transfer of land ownership and livestock operations from efficient owner-operators to ownership by nonfarm corporations and other off-farm investors," he said. "Family agriculture is the backbone of our production system and any transition that threatens to destroy the owner-operator system is unacceptable to us and bad for our

country." Woodland said Bob Arndt, a southwest Minnesota farmer, is directing nationwide coordination of the meetings. His activities include setting up a communications structure that will tie all farmers and ranchers together nationwide.

"This isn't a farm organization problem," Arndt said. "It's a farmer problem and the help of all producers is essential in heading off this so-called transition and carrying out a plan to get enough

income from the marketplace to put profit back into agriculture."

Arndt said the number of rural people who participate in the meetings for action will determine how long it will take to increase farm prices to a fair level. "I believe enough people in rural America are ready to stop this theft of income from agriculture producers to reverse the trend toward lower and lower prices, and get back on the road to economic justice in the shortest possible time."

Farm Bureau criticizes recent farm legislation

WASHINGTON — The American Farm Bureau Federation strongly opposes Farm Bill proposals recently passed by two House subcommittees. The nation's largest farm group warns the legislation fails to send a clear market signal to producers and creates farm policy that is untested.

"The 1985 Farm Bill must reduce existing incentives for overproduction, ensure price competitiveness for U.S. farm products and most recognize that all commodities are interrelated and any change in supply and demand of one affects the other," said AFBF President Robert Delano.

"The marketing loan and dairy programs approved by the House Agriculture subcommittees do none of these tasks. Rather they encourage overproduction, exert negative impacts on other agricultural industries and raise uncertainties about future farm program costs," warned Delano.

The House Dairy Subcommittee has passed legislation which revives the recently-ended dairy diversion program, places assessments on production and raises the Class 1 differentials in 35 federal milk marketing orders.

"We strongly oppose the dairy diversion and assessment programs. We must avoid any proposal which fails to send a clear signal to producers. The previous dairy diversion program placed the burden of cost on the producer without passing any of the benefits on to consumers. We don't believe this is the answer to problems facing the dairy industry," said Delano.

Farm Bureau's dairy proposal, which calls for a support price set

at 90 percent of the average of all milk prices for the previous three years is intended to bring supply and demand in balance without the use of assessments or diversion programs.

Earlier the House Wheat, Soybeans and Feed Grains Subcommittee approved legislation authorizing a marketing loan concept that is supposed to ensure that commodities move at market-clearing levels by encouraging the marketing of crops rather than forfeiting them to the government.

The "encouragement" would come from reductions in what producers would have to pay back to the government on Commodity Credit Corporation loans. Producers with marketing loans would be allowed to pay back only the prevailing market price for their crops, thus keeping the difference between the loan rate and the market price. "The marketing loan essentially creates another kind of deficiency payment and would likely keep market prices at or near loan levels and leave us no more competitive than now," said Delano.

The subcommittee also approved a payment-in-kind of up to 10 percent of the amount of commodities under loan to producers who pay back their loans.

"As approved by the subcommittee, the legislation does not appear to help us become competitive very quickly in world markets. The proposals also carry an unknown price tag," said Delano.

Delano called on Farm Bureau members to contact their representatives during the July 4 recess to express their concerns about the legislative proposals.

Nottingham Country Fair



Homemade country crafts are a popular feature of the Nottingham Park Country Fair. Pictured above, a visitor to last year's event admires the stenciling exhibit beneath the shady trees of the park, located in West Nottingham Township. The fifth annual Country Fair will be held Aug. 3 and 4, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The crafts sale will feature approximately 50 local artisans. In addition, there'll be live music on center stage all weekend, 4-H Club activities, agricultural displays and demonstrations, and plenty of country-style food. Special Saturday activities include a fair parade, turtle races, frog jumping contests, and pie eating competitions. Admission is \$1 per car each day. Nottingham Park is located south of Oxford, off the U.S. Route 1 bypass. For more details on the Country Fair, call the Park Office at (215) 932-9195.

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