Farm Credit can solve its problems according to top federal regulator

MANHATTAN, KN - The Farm Credit System has the financial and human resources to handle its own problems without Federal assistance if it makes proper use of those resources, according to Donald E. Wilkinson, governor of the Farm Credit Administration. Of allegations that the system is on the verge of collapse and needs an immediate infusion of Government capital, Wilkinson said "it isn't and it doesn't."

Speaking at the National Institute of Cooperative Education here, Wilkinson freely admitted the system has credit problems resulting from low farm income. but said they are manageable if the agricultural economy does not deteriorate beyond present expectations. Even though there is stress in the credit area, he said, the system's capital and reserve position remains strong

To back up his claim, Wilkinson cited year-end figures showing the system's 37 banks and \$5.1 billion in capital stock and its Production Credit Associations had \$1.9 billion. Earned net worth totaled \$4.1 billion for the banks and \$2.5 billion for Federal Land Bank Associations and PCAs. Overall reserves for possible loan losses totaled \$1.3 billion.

Wilkinson said the difficulty was that capital and capital management are disbursed among the system's 37 regional banks and nearly 800 local associations.

"To help correct that situation." he said, "capital should be consolidated in those districts where **Production Credit Associations are** having severe financial troubles and must be consolidated in those districts that face the prospect of requiring financial assistance from other parts of the system. Merging into a single PCA will permit individual districts to maximize earnings and capital management."

Commenting on the importance of approving national financial assistance programs, Wilkinson expressed concern about the risk of an adverse decision by a minority of the district boards of directors.

If these assistance plans aren't approved or the conditions of plans that are approved aren't accepted by the district involved, the options liquidation of troubled associations or even the liquidation of financially stressed banks, he

Liquidations of associations could cause problems for borrowers, Wilkinson said, and the liquidation of a Farm Credit Bank would have serious repercussions in the bond markets.

And in the event that Federal financial assistance became necessary, it would be inap-propriate to ask for it unless and until the system had done everything in its power to solve its own problems, he said.

Turning to credit conditions in



the system, Wilkinson stated that on Mar. 31, the 37 banks reported \$8.3 billion in nonperforming loans and the PCAs \$2.7 billion. Of these

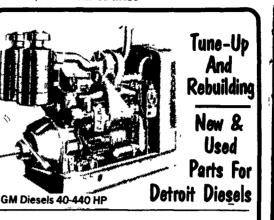
totals, \$1.5 billion of the bank loans and \$663 million of the PCA loans were in nonaccrual status.

During the first quarter of 1985,

\$61.1 million in loans, he said.

"Despite these problems, the 37 Farm Credit Banks reported net earnings of \$90.5 million for the quarter. Earnings are essential to maintain investor confidence and ing a 'risk penalty' on to avc securitios, would undoubtedly cost borrower. over the long run.

He suggested that differential interest rate programs would help alleviate the flight of good



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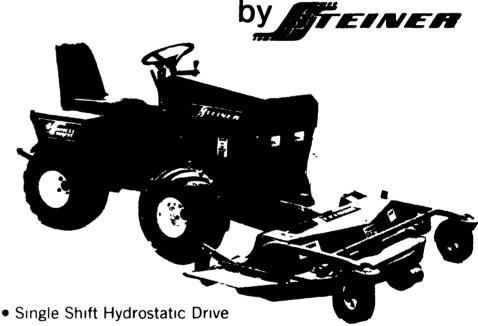


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