

# Reagan explains views on Farm Bill controversy

WASHINGTON — Senator Jesse Helms has released the text of a letter he received from President Reagan, outlining the President's views on the 1985 farm bill.

"The President has outlined to members of the Senate Agriculture Committee the objectives he thinks must be met in the farm bill to return the hope of prosperity to American agriculture," said Helms. "I have discussed the farm bill with the President, and I can assure my friends in agriculture that the President insists that the 1985 farm bill must avoid the mistakes of the past and set agriculture on the path of long-term growth and prosperity."

"I think the clear message in this letter is that the President is

keenly aware of the crisis in agriculture and stands ready to work with Congress to address the problems faced by farmers," said Helms.

Here is the text of the President's letter:

One of the most important issues facing the Congress this year is the writing of the 1985 Farm Bill. In this legislation, the Congress will have the opportunity to make the fundamental reforms necessary to assure long-term farm prosperity.

We are in a period of difficulty for America's farmers. Prices for the major crops are weak. Demand for exports has fallen as foreign suppliers fill markets once ours alone. Although the successful effort to control inflation has

helped... an end to double-digit increases in the cost of fuel, fertilizer, and other supplies, at the same time it weakened many farmers financially by dampening inflation-fueled speculation that had been causing land prices to rise sharply.

Farming and ranching are hard work, maybe the hardest. And the strength of our farmers and ranchers has always been the strength of their hopes for the future, seeing a young son or daughter working the fields or tending the herd, hoping they will stay on the farm or ranch and be able to make a go of it.

Those hopes are threatened today. We hear that there is no future for our farmers and ran-

chers, only a faster or slower slide into failure.

Only by working together can we plant the seed of hope for America's agriculture community.

In writing the laws that will govern Federal farm programs in the coming years, I believe that we can find agreement on objectives to guide us:

- Establishment of commodity price supports that allow export-dependent commodities to become competitive in international markets;
- Gradual reductions in the level of income support each year;
- Reductions in the dairy support price as long as surpluses exist;
- A phase out of acreage

reduction programs; and  
• Targeting of income benefits to legitimate family farm operations.

In addition, we must develop agricultural policies that do not harm our overall fiscal policy. In this regard, the budget levels adopted by the House and Senate in the First Concurrent Resolution on the Budget should serve as the appropriate balance between the funding needs of farm programs and the need to reduce the deficit.

The farm problem is as important as any challenge we face. We must, therefore, approach it with a spirit of cooperation and consensus. A way of life is at risk, one too precious to our national heritage to be the subject of politically-inspired machinations.

I have asked Secretary John Block to renew the Administration's effort to arrive at a farm bill that will achieve the objectives outlined above. He will work with those in the Congress who share these objectives.

I look forward to signing a farm bill that provides hope, not measured doses of despair. But I must note that I am prepared to disapprove legislation that repeats the mistakes of the past.

We must work together to fulfill our responsibility to this nation's farmers.

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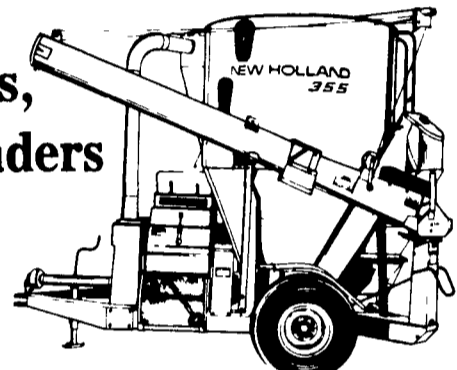
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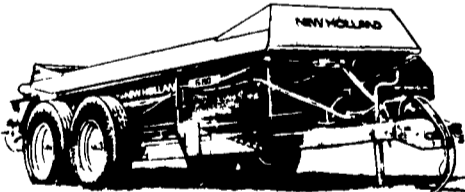
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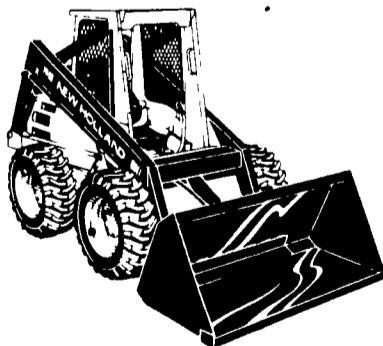
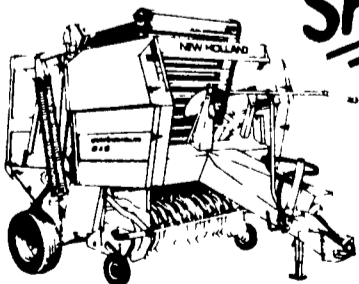
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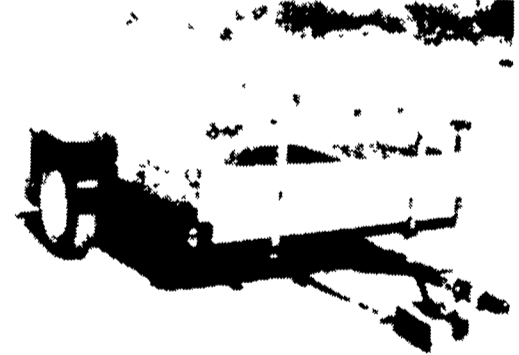
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