

# Lancaster Farming

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## Congress passes Farm Bill; Reagan expected to sign

**BY JAMES H. EVERHART**  
**WASHINGTON** — After months of controversy, drama and intrigue, the 1985 Farm Bill needs only the signature of President Ronald Reagan to become law.

A compromise version of the landmark legislation was approved by the House and Senate Wednesday. A conference committee had labored eight tension-filled days to iron out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill.

In a related development, the House and Senate also approved the Farm Credit aid package, and sent the measure to the President for his signature. The bill sets up a new government body to absorb billions of dollars of the system's delinquent loans.

Although the Farm Bill is at least \$2 billion over the Administration's three-year spending goals, the president will sign it and the Farm Credit package, according to USDA Secretary John Block.

"I am pleased to announce that the president intends to sign the Farm Bill and the Farm Credit legislation early next week," Block said in a press conference Thursday.

The bill, he said, "has some very good policy in it," and he commended the Congress for coming up with a bill the President could sign. And though he indicated the legislation is "not a perfect Farm Bill," it was, he said, "the best possible product that the Administration and Congress could achieve, considering the depressed economic condition in agriculture."

The Farm Bill reflects much of the Reagan Administration's basic approach to farm policy, although the package differs markedly from the proposal it sent to Capitol Hill last spring.

The bill, for instance, contains significant reductions in price and income supports, which the Administration advanced as a method of making U.S. agriculture more competitive in world markets.

The measure also removed a dairy diversion plan similar to the 15-month program in place until March of this year. The House had included a diversion plan in its version of the Farm Bill, but settled on a whole-herd buyout plan as a compromise.

The Reagan Administration had singled out dairy diversion as one

provision it would not accept in the final package. Nevertheless, the concept had advanced through

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### Holiday deadlines

The office of Lancaster Farming will be closed in observance of the Christmas and New Year's Day holidays.

Advertisers and news sources are asked to meet the following deadlines for the Dec. 28 and Jan. 4 issues: Mailbox Market and public sale ads, Monday at 5 p.m.; General news, Classified Section B and display ads, Tuesday noon; all other classified, 9 a.m. Thursday; and late-breaking news, noon Thursday.

Materials for Lancaster Farming's special Farm Show issue, to be published Jan. 11, should also be received at the Lancaster Farming office as soon as possible. Ad deadlines are Friday, Dec. 27, and the news deadline is Monday, Jan. 6.

### Wednesday's leaf averages \$1.16

## Tobacco auction gains momentum

**BY JACK HUBLEY**  
**INTERCOURSE** — "No Smoking" signs were conspicuously absent at Martin Auctioneers' sale barn in Intercourse on Monday, where the Pennsylvania Tobacco Auction, Inc., conducted the state's first tobacco auction in four decades.

A full house of growers watched as North Carolina tobacco auctioneer Mitch Ashby threaded his way down the long rows of neatly baled tobacco, taking bids from the train of buyers following on the opposite side of the rows.

Monday's sale average for the 295,000 pounds sold was \$1.09 per pound across all grades, according to PTA's manager, Eric Probst. Prices for "tops" and "middles"—the better grades—ranged from

\$1.10 to \$1.15 a pound. "Bottoms" sold for 80 cents to \$1.02, with "out-grade" tobacco selling for 35 to 50 cents a pound, Probst said.

"I predict the market's going to go higher," said Columbia grower B.C. Brubaker. If the farmers stick with this thing, they'll get their price at the auction."

Monday's prices for the better tobacco were about in line with what buyers were paying on the farm so far this season, said buyer

Joe Irving of Ideal Leaf in Lancaster. "The companies can't afford to put more in this tobacco than they can afford to pay on the farm," he said.

Many growers speculated, though, that news of the upcoming auction had prompted buyers to seek private-treaty sales more vigorously in recent weeks, resulting in higher-than-normal on-farm prices.

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A line of tobacco buyers give the first-up, "even money" sign at Monday's tobacco auction.

### A look into ag's future

Farm Journal staff economist John Marten consulted his crystal ball at the 12th Annual Mid-Atlantic No-Till Conference in Maryland on Wednesday.

For a preview of agriculture in 1986 turn to page A.

from Lancaster Farming!