

## Grange Testifies At Ag Hearing

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "The National Grange believes that the future of U.S. agriculture will be tied closely to policies that convince foreign producers and their governments that U.S. farmers intend to be competitive," concluded Robert Frederick, Legislative Director of the National Grange, in recent testimony last week before a hearing of the House Agriculture Committee on the current agricultural situation and outlook for the 100th Congress.

Frederick told the Committee that the trade sections of the Food Security Act of 1985 were "the strongest in any farm bill that has been passed by Congress." He emphasized greater benefits were possible if Congress were to adopt the Grange-supported marketing loan program for all U.S. crops. The marketing loan would keep

U.S. commodities competitive on world markets, maintaining adequate income for farmers and avoiding government costs of storing surplus commodities which may reduce future prices. Frederick also spoke strongly for targeting any farm program benefits to the moderate-sized farm.

Under dairy programs, Frederick said the Grange was satisfied with the reduction in milk surpluses that were projected for next year. He noted the Grange's commitment to implementing any diversion, termination, or assessment program on the basis of regional contributions to surplus problems.

Frederick charged that farm bill programs providing guaranteed loans and interest rate buydowns for troubled farmers are being diluted by the Farm Credit Ad-

ministration's manipulation of the commercial farm credit markets. "Congress must finally develop a strong policy of farm debt reform and competitive interest rates early in its 100th Session," he said.

Frederick said conservation programs designed to limit erosion by taking land out of production should not receive priority over programs that reduce erosion on land that is in production. He also called for better coordination between the swampbuster wetlands protection regulations of the 1985 Farm Bill and similar regulations in the Clean Water Act.

With poultry growers currently not being afforded payment and trust provisions comparable to livestock producers and fruit and vegetable growers, Frederick said the Grange intends to secure such protection for poultry growers under the Packers and Stockyards

Act early in the 100th Congress. Statistics show a continuing trend toward mergers, bankruptcies and ever fraudulent actions by a few processors. "Poultry growers need the same protection other

producers enjoy," Frederick said. The hearing was not related to any particular piece of legislation pending before Congress, however, Frederick said he feels it may be a first step in re-examining current commodity programs.

## Maryland Honored For Ag Preservation

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Maryland's Agricultural Land Preservation Program has been selected by the Board of Directors of the American Farmland Trust to receive an AFT Award for Excellence in Agricultural Conservation in the category of public policy.

The Board acknowledged that Maryland's agricultural preservation program, has achieved an

exemplary level of dedication and effectiveness to which other states can aspire.

The Ag-Land Preservation Program achieved its most productive year in the establishment of new agricultural preservation districts in fiscal year '86 by approving 140 new petitions protecting 19,982 acres. As of the end of the fiscal year, 841 agricultural preservation districts preserving 124,172 acres were enrolled in the program. Agricultural preservation districts now exist in 22 of the State's 23 counties.

The FY'86 Easement Acquisition Program was also the most productive year in the Foundation's history. After settlement, 74 districts will add 11,439 acres to Maryland's list of permanently preserved agricultural land. There are now 316 easement properties permanently protecting 48,725 acres.

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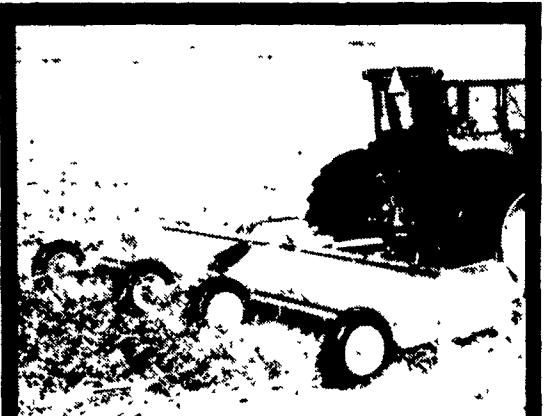
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