

Grange Leader Speaks Out Against Family Farm Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "The so-called 'Family Farm Act' is not an acceptable alternative to current farm programs," Edward Andersen, Master of the National Grange, said in response to the introduction of the Harkin/Gephardt bill. "Mandatory production controls, which would force the government to police the actions of the farmer, would bring about a loss of the productive benefits of our American capitalistic system," he charged.

The national farm leader said that American agriculture is involved in the world market and this approach destroys any hope of regaining our fair share of the world market. According to an Iowa State University study, the Harkin/Gephardt proposal would reduce the volume of American commodities which would be exported by a substantial amount from the current program levels.

Andersen believes that the lower level of exports in the Iowa State study is inflated unless a tremendous export subsidy program, which may cost more than the current program, is provided. "During trade negotiations, we are trying to reduce export subsidies, not in-

crease them. The Harkin/Gephardt proposal would force the United States to increase export subsidies in order for our commodities to remain competitive, thereby causing a breakdown of multilateral trade negotiations," Andersen said.

"Furthermore, the cost of food to the American consumer will increase drastically," said the National Master. "According to Senator Harkin, the cost of food over the next nine years would increase by 7 percent. Simple economics indicate that as food prices increase, consumer demand decreases, causing more strain on rural America," continued Andersen. "In sum, the proposed program would reduce demand not only abroad, but domestically as well," Andersen stated.

Andersen cited other problems with the bill. "After an 18-month period, livestock producers would be subject to increased input costs resulting from higher grain prices, severely damaging the livestock segment of the agricultural economy." He warned that the Harkin/Gephardt bill could result in the loss of United States cattle feeding operations to Canada, forcing America to import more beef.

Another negative effect on the United States beef industry would result from the proposed mandatory dairy quotas. "Cattlemen are just now recovering from the impact of the whole herd dairy buyout program. They don't need the supply-demand balance upset again due to government policies," Andersen said. The Grange leader pointed out that the dairy program is functioning as intended by reducing surplus, reducing production, and reducing cow and heifer numbers. Andersen praised the success of the dairy program and urged that it "be left alone."

While the proposed program calls for a maximum 35 percent unpaid set-aside, Andersen repeated figures from a USDA study, which shows that a 50 percent set-aside is a more accurate requirement to accomplish the goals of Sen. Harkin (D-IA) and Rep. Gephardt (D-MO). "The farmer should be free to plant the amount of grain which his best business judgment indicates the market will accept," Andersen said. "Rather than mandatory production controls or even voluntary controls, the producer should be able to plant with the

market in mind.

"A targeted marketing loan coupled with no acreage reduction, mandated by the government, would allow the farmer to produce for a freer market without government interference. The production decisions need to be made in rural America, not Washington, D.C. The Harkin/Gephardt bill would not accomplish this goal. In fact, it would force more government controls, reducing production efficiencies and restricting our competitiveness in the world market," Andersen concluded.

Grange Supports Wolff As Ag Secretary

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania State Grange presented testimony during a recent Senate committee hearing on behalf of Designee Secretary of Agriculture Boyd E. Wolff.

Pennsylvania State Grange legislative director, Brenda Shambaugh, told the group assembled, "The Grange is honored to support Mr. Boyd Wolff as Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture." She continued, "Because he actually farmed for over 30 years, he understands the trials and hardships of family

farming and can effectively communicate with the agricultural community."

"Mr. Wolff's financial involvement as chairman of the West Central Federal Land Bank provides him with the fiscal knowledge necessary to effectively manage a department budget. As a Penn State Agriculture trustee, Mr. Wolff has already proven his ability in dealing with the academic community."

Shambaugh added, "Mr. Wolff has stated that marketing and improving farmer income will be top priorities for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. The Grange agrees with these goals for the betterment of Pennsylvania Agriculture, and we feel this

foresight proves that Mr. Wolff is well versed with the agricultural needs of Pennsylvania."

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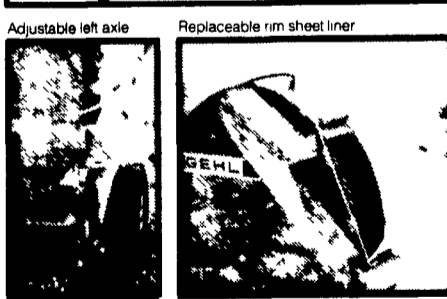
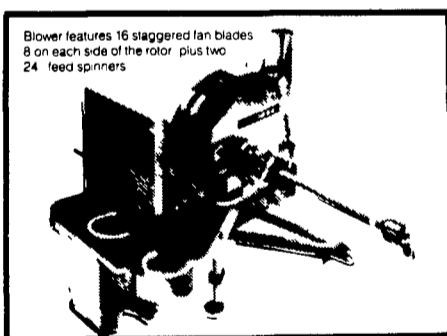
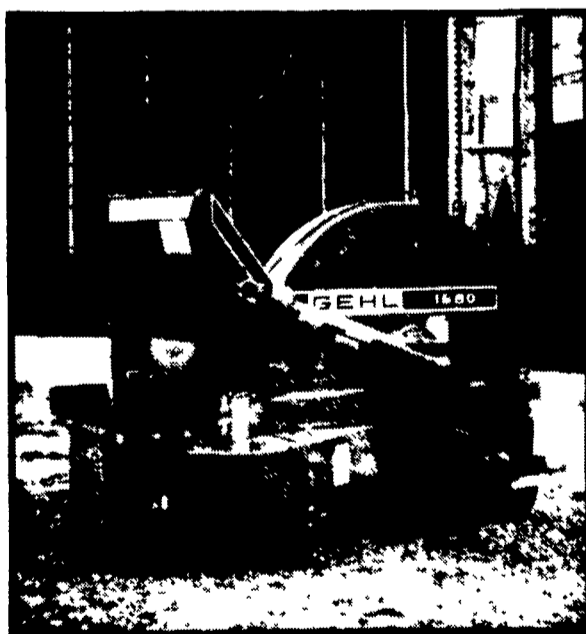
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