

# Full Farm Flexibility Is Program Option

WASHINGTON, D.C.— When the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) conceived the idea of Full Farm Flexibility, members agreed it was a great idea. But they knew it would be a tough sell in Washington.

Full Farm Flexibility is different from the status quo. It actually calls for change in current farm programs. And that is the first obstacle to any program that sets out to revamp an institution. NCGA's idea is simple. Give farmers the opportunity to farm for the market.

Unfortunately, that's not how current farm programs are organized. The bottom line with the 1990 farm bill is limited one-way flexibility for program crop participants. Producers may plant selected crops other than the program crop on up to 25 percent of any participating crop acreage base without losing base.

The current message to farmers is this: Plant too much, and you're out; plant the wrong thing, and you're out; plant it at the wrong time, and you're out. Three strikes can be pretty painful to a farmer who's just trying to make a living.

Full Farm Flexibility would correct that situation. To accomplish Full Farm Flexibility, simply:

- Let producers plant any

crop on their farm and still receive deficiency payments for the program crop.

- Calculate payment acres by taking 75 percent of enrolled base acres. In effect, 25 percent of base acres would be unpaid and would not receive a deficiency payment.

- Maintain current levels of target prices and establish the loan rate at current levels or higher.

- The Acreage Reduction Program, 0-85/92 and Normal Flex Acres are no longer applicable.

In the comprehensive report, NCGA has compared Full Farm Flexibility, as outline

above, with baseline and a 25 percent normal flex acre option, which is an extension of current limited one-way flexibility. As the study found, not only does Full Farm Flexibility afford farmers and consumers opportunity, it also saves money. Commodity Credit Corporation outlays for three major commodities—corn, wheat and cotton—would fall by \$4 billion over the next five years, as compared to baseline. That's less money from the taxpayers. Market prices would rise enough so that farmers would not be hurt economically.

Another finding: Full Farm Flexibility does not lead to huge production shifts that some may have predicted. In fact, this study shows that 25



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percent flex would provide enough flexibility in the aggregate, but it may not address the needs of individual farmers trying to make the best decisions for their operations.

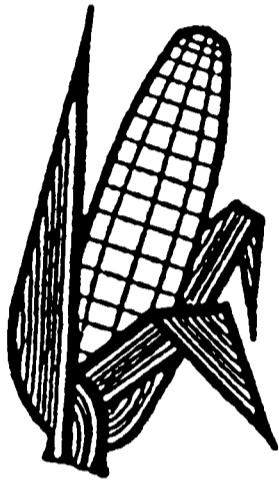
Full Farm Flexibility affords a host of advantages such as increased the crop rotations that will reduce chemical application rates, conserve soil, and provide more habitat for wildlife.

The NCGA will be the first to admit that there is no magical complete solution. Nothing, including Full Farm Flexibility, will answer all of the ques-

tions or solve all of the problems facing U.S. agriculture today. Full Farm Flexibility is about as close to a solution as you will come.

Full Farm Flexibility represents the evolution of power. Farmers—not Washington—have the opportunity to decide what works best for their farms, whether it relates to the market, the environment, agronomics, conservation, or management considerations.

Farmers need the ability to make these decisions. They can have that with Full Farm Flexibility.



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