

Farm Agreement Far Cry From Promised Reform

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "While congressional Republicans swept into power on campaign promises of reform, the agriculture agreement reached by Republican budget conferees perpetuates the same old bureaucracy and even has the audacity to set up a new welfare system," said Leland Swenson, president of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

In addition, Swenson said the agreement would lower producer incomes, reduce conservation benefits, and potentially do away with local control of agriculture committees.

The agriculture conference committee recently announced that its GOP members had reached an agreement on language that will govern farm programs into the 21st century and beyond. The agreement melds Senate legislation on farm programs with House Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Robert's, Kan., Freedom to Farm Act.

According to Swenson, NFU vehemently opposes the conference committee agreement because it would:

- Lower farm incomes by institutionalizing low commodity prices via low loan rates. Current loan rates (i.e. \$2.58 for wheat, \$1.89 for corn), which are now set below the cost of production, could NEVER be raised, only lowered.

- Increase nonpaid (flex) acres from 15 to 30 percent.

- Put more land into production by eliminating set asides and reducing funding for the Conservation Reserve Program. This will plunge production agriculture into a cycle of lower prices and higher levels of environmental degradation.

- Convert farm programs, which were devised to stabilize food supplies and price into a welfare program by decoupling farm payments from production. Farmers could even plant nothing and still receive payments.

- Virtually prevent beginning farmers from entering production agriculture by limiting farm program participation to those who have participated prior to 1995.

- Raise Commodity Credit Corporation interest rates, thereby reducing farm incomes.

- Eliminate the Farmer Owned Reserve Program.

- Retain the triple entity provision, enabling the largest producers to continue to receive large benefits. Not only does this quickly drain limited funding for farm

programs, it maintains the image of "rich farmers on the government dole."

- Nearly render federal crop insurance insolvent since producers can choose not to participate. Federal crop insurance was only recently improved in order that crop insurance be used in place of ad hoc disaster assistance.

- Eliminate the Emergency Livestock Feed Assistance Program.

According to NFU, some of the more obscure provisions in the agreement will eventually exact the greatest impact on American agriculture.

"It repeals the 1938 and 1949 agricultural acts, which established our farm policy infrastructure from local U.S. Department

of Agriculture committees to the Commodity Credit Corporation," said Larry Mitchell, head of NFU's government relations office. "The elimination of these structures indicates Congress' sincerity in completely abolishing farm programs over seven years.

"When Farmers Union produc-

Annual Tree Seedling Sale Under Way

CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin Co.) — The annual tree seedling sale of the Franklin County Conservation District is in progress.

This excellent stock comes from a state certified nursery. This year's seedlings must be purchased in bundles of 25 per species. This insures you of receiving first quality seedlings since packets will not have to be opened

ers met with President Clinton at the White House earlier in the week, they left feeling assured that the president will veto budget reconciliation, in part, because of what it would do to family farmers," said Mitchell.

NFU supports the Family Farm Empowerment Act, a farm bill all upon arrival from the nursery.

Seedlings offered this year include (with 25/bundle prices in parenthesis): Spanish Scotch Pine (\$6.50), white pine (\$8.50), Douglas fir (\$7.25), Colorado blue spruce (\$7), Norway spruce (\$8), Japanese black pine (\$7), concolor fir (\$9), Canadian hemlock (\$7.75), red maple (\$8.50), Chinese chestnut (\$11), and white ash

ternative introduced in Congress in October, which would save the federal government \$5 billion over five years by capping loan amounts. The provisions of this legislation would also simplify farm programs, reduce red tape, and leave federal programs less vulnerable to abuse.

(Fertilizer briquettes are also being offered at \$3 per 25.

If you are interested in ordering seedlings, please contact the Franklin County Conservation District, 550 Cleveland Avenue, Chambersburg, or call (717) 264-8074 for an order form.

All orders must be prepaid. Deadline for ordering seedlings is Feb. 2.



SEASONS' GREETINGS

To Our Friends and Customers:

"O Zion, that bringest good tidings - Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: He shall feed His flocks like a shepherd, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Is. 40:10-11

Christmas is almost upon us again and another year is about to pass. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to our valued customers and friends, for your patronage. Our aim continues to be committed to excellent products and service.

We wish you the best for your Holiday Season and a prosperous 1996 year.

Thank you and God Bless You.

Sincerely,

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Arthur H. Shirk, Pres.

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