

# Farmers Get Pat on Back, But Pocketbooks Still Hurt

**WASHINGTON, D. C.**—America's farmers, who have often been accused of getting lots of government money for not producing, finally got some nice things said about them. The praise, long deserved, but slow in coming, showed that contrary to public opinion, the nation's farmers have been extremely productive, outstripping non-farm productivity growth two-to-one.

The man citing the figures was no less than President Nixon himself, and the occasion was a "Salute to Agriculture," which brought farm machinery and animals to the White House lawn. Many Washington observers say it was the first time any farm animals had been on the spacious lawn since President Wilson had sheep grazing there during World War I.

The salute to America's farmers came at a time when spiraling costs are sending food prices higher and the farmer's profits lower despite a rapid increase in his productivity. And farmers, like their city cousins, aren't happy about their situation.

## Productivity Climbs

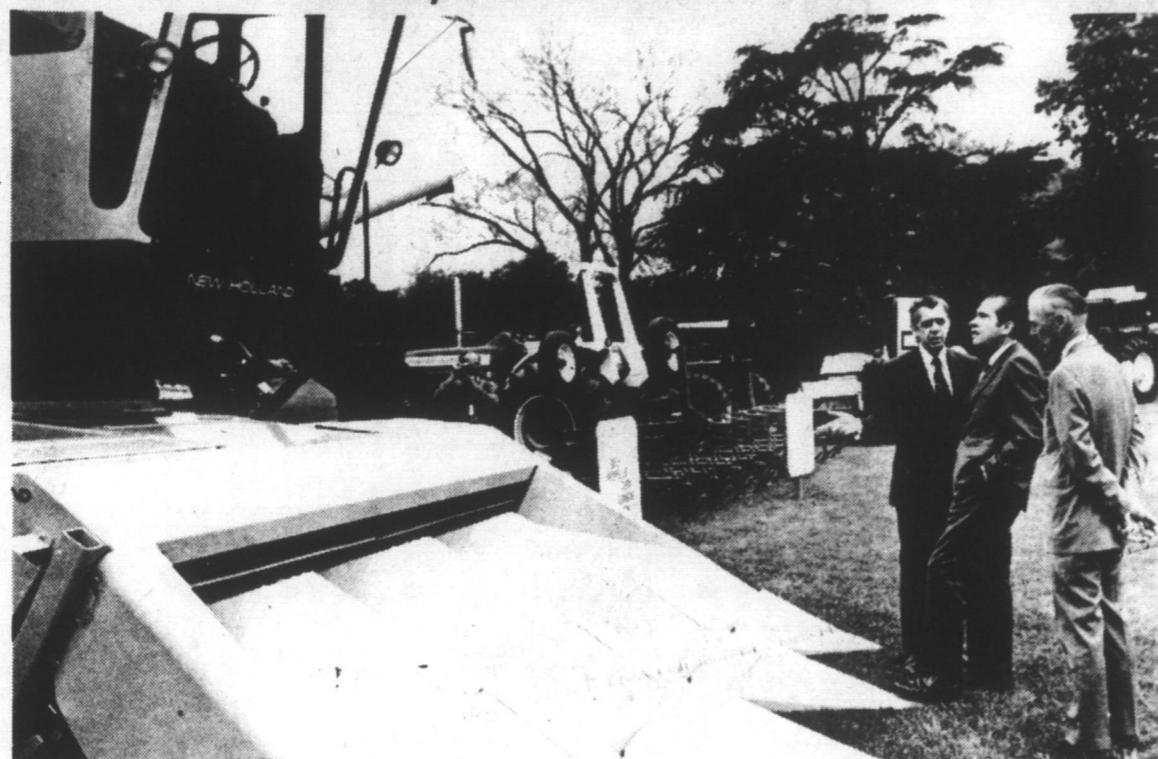
Speaking to a group of farm leaders gathered at the White House for the event, President Nixon noted that in recent years the productivity of American farmers has been increasing at an average of six percent per year, while non-farm productivity has been increasing at three percent.

This productivity, the President said, makes Americans the best fed and best-clothed people in the world. Our agriculture, he added, is a leading contribution toward world peace.

"Armies from American agriculture go abroad carrying plowshares, not swords," he said.

## Some Farm Facts

All the attention given farmers came at a time when they will be needing better understanding of their problems. The latest census figures indicate a shift of population that means urban and suburban areas hold an overwhelming balance of political clout. Many Americans, far removed from farm contacts, will be exerting pressures on legislatures for passage or re-



FARMER'S PRODUCTIVITY has been helped by modern farm machinery like this New Holland combine being described to President Nixon by Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin, left, at White House salute to agriculture display.

action of legislation which affects farmers.

The dwindling number of farmers has left the job of feeding the nation in the hands of about three million farm owners and operators. They're using bigger, more sophisticated machinery and larger amounts of fertilizer and other necessary inputs. This is costing them more, while their income remains static.

## Marketing Costs Up

In a speech in Washington last year, former Congresswoman Catherine May said it takes an investment of \$200,000 in land, machinery, and other farm costs for a farmer to earn enough to support a family of four and send his two children to college. Emphasizing these costs at the White House event, notes that

Dr. Norman Borlaug, Nobel prize winner who developed new miracle wheat, joined the president on the tour. The combine was one of five pieces of machinery displayed to illustrate the large investment farmers make to step up their productivity.

farmers are caught in the middle of a squeeze from rising operating costs and a declining share of retail food prices. As an example, USDA figures indicate the farmer gets machines on display with price tags attached. A tractor with six-plow hookup was \$18,587; a tractor with cultivator was listed at \$15,545; a grain combine \$15,669; and a grain dryer at \$6,662.

## Marketing Costs Up

While food costs are increasing, and signs are they will continue to do so, farmers are reaping little benefit from spiraling costs. A brochure, by New Holland, the farm equipment division of Sperry Rand, issued to help show the farmers' side of the story, notes that

about 2.6 cents for the corn in a 31 cent box of corn flakes. The rest of the cost is in preparing, packaging, transportation and other marketing costs. And, the farmer is at the mercy of his age old adversary—weather—in trying to make even the meager living he manages to get for his labors.

Compared to average factory worker wages, his pay for the work involved and the financial risks he takes leaves the farmer on the light end of the scale. As the New Holland brochure points out, average net income per farm in the United States in 1969 was \$5,401. The average hourly wage for farmworkers performed slightly more than half the expenditure of USDA funds in 1970.

## Farm Program Misleading

"Agriculture" money that benefits city and suburban dwellers includes large expenditures such as inspection and marketing services; forestry expenditures; the food stamp program; the special milk program; and the child nutrition program.

## NO. CAROLINA GARDEN TIME

"What are the trees now blooming on the campus with the beautiful yellow flowers?" One is a Golden Rain tree and the other a Golden Chain tree. They are both beautiful plants, not commonly found in the landscape.

The Golden Rain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) is a native of China where the trees may grow to a height of 40-60 feet. The leaves are very large and handsome and divided into numerous leaflets. The yellow flowers are real pretty and borne in large terminal clusters, followed by inflated triangular seed pods which bear one or more hard brown seeds. In this area the trees may reach a height of 30-40 feet. The tree likes full sun and a well drained soil.

The Golden Chain tree (*Laburnum anagyroides*; also other species and hybrids) is ranked among the most decorative of all spring flowering trees. The golden flowers are borne on long pendent clusters in May and June. The tree will grow to a height of about 25 feet and is very long lived. The heartwood is very hard, heavy and dark in color. In a manufactured state, it has the appearance of ebony. It is a native of Europe and is sometimes used in that country for "turnery and cabinet work." You might keep this in mind if you are a woodworking buff.

A warning note. The Golden Chain tree, as are all Laburnums, is poisonous in all its parts if taken internally. Warn the children about this, especially if they have a yen for seed eating....

Side dressing your vegetable crops with readily available nitrogen will promote growth and make your products more tender and tasty -- beans, tomatoes, watermelons, cantaloupes, squash, cabbage, lettuce, broccoli, kale and spinach.

It is best not to use too much nitrogen at one time. Two light applications, about three weeks apart, is better than one heavy application after the crops have been planted and are making good growth.

Use two kitchen measuring cups of nitrate of soda or one measuring cup of ammonium nitrate for each 100 feet of row. For the hill crops -- watermelons, squash, etc. -- use one level teaspoonful of nitrate of soda per plant. If you have been having good luck using a complete fertilizer for side dressing, don't change. However, I prefer the readily available nitrogen as suggested. Keep the fertilizer off the foliage.

Be on constant watch for insect and disease pests. Clobber the pests before they get you. There is no point in locking the door after the horse has been stolen.

SATURDAY, JULY 17, 1971

THE CAROLINA TIMES-7B

# Utilities Bill Softened

Legislation granting "quick take" condemnation authority for electric power companies has been watered down in the General Assembly.

The bill is expected to clear the House with provisions similar to powers now granted to the State Highway Commission.

A House committee reworded the Senate-passed provisions Thursday, to the chagrin of some power company lawyers, and sent the bill back to the House floor.

The condemnation provisions were rewritten "completely in favor of the landowner," said Rep. Sam Johnson, D-Wake, chairman of the committee.

The bill would give the State

Utilities Commission "one-stop" authority for granting environmental clearance for power plants and transmission lines. State environmental agencies and private conservationists would be guaranteed voice in the decisions.

Under that provision, firms would have to go to the utilities commission when seeking environmental clearance. Under present law, they have to go to several agencies.

The bill, already passed by the Senate, ran into trouble on the House floor last week and was returned to committee when Rep. McNeill Smith, D-Guilford, asserted that its quick take condemnation provision was "novel and ruthless."

Those expressing satisfaction with the changes in the measure included Rep. Jim Johnson, R-Cabarrus, who served on the Judiciary I sub-

committee which drafted the changes. Johnson said that as originally drawn the bill gave the power companies greater compensation authority than state agencies possess.

He said the amended condemnation provisions are similar to the law under which the State Highway Commission can condemn lands for road construction.

The quick take provision would permit a power company which has obtained a certificate of convenience and necessity from the utilities commission for a power project to move to take immediate possession of land needed for a project when it could not agree with a landowner on the price.

The provision would require the power company to advance what it considered the property was worth and the landowner would have immediate use of the money while the courts were making a final determination of the value of the land.

Rep. Sam Johnson said his committee tightened up a provision under which the utilities commission could issue a certificate of convenience and necessity for a power project without hearing in an emergency.

Johnson pointed out the bill now provides that such emergency certificates are to be issued only when an "imminent emergency threatens the health, welfare and safety of the public."

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