

Farmers Have Come A Long Way During Past Twenty Years

More Than Sixty Thousand Farms Foreclosed In 1932

Workers On Farms Have Had Part In The March Ahead

There Are More Owners And Fewer Tenants In This Country Now

By Congressman Price of Illinois

Farm life by and large has changed since the old days from poverty living to American living, from fatback standards to beef-stake standards. That is the simple fact behind all the talk about agricultural programs.

American farmers and their wives have achieved this change through their own hard work. But farmers have always worked hard. They worked hard during the 1920's—and over half a million of them went broke. They worked hard in 1932—and by the end of the year were all virtually bankrupt. In the past twenty years, new policies have made the difference—while most of the Old Guard were still obstructing.

I. Prices up, Production up, Income up.

In 1932 farm families in the

A WOMAN'S WORK

A woman's work on a Bavarian farm was revealed in statistical apercu when a rural hausfrau opened her diary to the public gaze. In 39 years she had given birth to 8 children; she had prepared 56,900 meals plus 133 holiday dinners, and had baked 33,400 loaves of bread and 7,890 cakes; she had spent 43,680 hours housecleaning, had made 200 children's dresses, 994 women's dresses and men's suits, and 224 pairs of socks; and she had raised 2,800 chickens and 220 pigs, involving 1,314,000 meals for animals. And, of course, in her spare time she kept one diary.—United Nations World

Midwest found it cheaper to burn corn for fuel than to buy coal. In 1932 we had sunk to 30 cent wheat, 15c corn, 5c cotton, 3c hogs, 2 1-2c beef, 5c wool and 3c sugar. Compare these with today's prices. In 1932 farm prices were 45 percent below parity. At the end of 1951 they stood 7 percent above parity. Farm production meanwhile has

jumped almost 50 percent since 1932. Net income for the average farmer (excluding inventory gains) stood at nearly \$2800 in 1951—almost ten times the 1932 figure. In terms of purchasing power, the average farmer's income has nearly quadrupled.

Democratic government helped bring these changes not only through its farm policies—embodied in the Agricultural Adjustment Acts, the Soil Conservation Act, the Commodity Credit Act—but by reviving all parts of the economy together, thus increasing farm markets.

II. More Owners, Fewer Tenants

Today nearly three-quarters of all farmers own their farms, a higher proportion than at any time since 1880.

Between 1880 and the early 1930's—a predominantly Republican period—each decade showed more and more farmers losing their farms, being forced into tenancy. But 1932, over 42 percent of the country's farms were run by tenants.

Since 1932, thanks to Democratic policies, this fifty-year Republican trend away from owner-operation has not only been reversed but its results have been completely wiped out.

If the Republican trend had continued, nearly half of America's farms would today be operated by tenants. Instead, only about a quarter of them are. If this achievement equals "dependence" or "socialism", then truly a camel can go through a needle's eye.

III. From the Sheriff at the Door to 91 Percent Equity

In 1932, 176 farms were foreclosed each and every day of the year. In 1950, less than three farmers a day suffered foreclosures. Most farmers in 1932 were virtually bankrupt. Today American farm owners hold an equity in their properties of 91 percent, about ten times as much as the total farm debt.

IV. From Banks that Charged High and Then Closed Their doors

To Cheap Loans, Safe Savings In 1932, 1,453 banks failed, with great losses to depositors. Last year not a single depositor in any insured bank suffered a penny of loss or a moment of delay. By 1932, American farmers had managed to conserve only \$3 billion in savings. By 1951, they had \$22 billion saved up.

In 1932, farm credit was both expensive and hard to get. Since 1933, Farm Credit Administration agencies have remedied this by making more than five million cheap loans, totalling \$20 billion. More than 2,000,000 small farmers have gotten loan help from the Farmers Home Administration.

V. Farming Also Has Come A Long Way

Electrification, through REA cooperatives, has transformed American farming and modernized farm life. In the early 1930's only one farm in ten had power-line service. Now nearly nine out of ten farms have such service. And since 1949 REA has begun to repeat the same story on telephones.

Public power, in such areas as the Tennessee and Columbia river valleys, has greatly aided in re-making farming in those regions.

Tractors and other equipment have also transformed farming. In 1930, American farmers had only 920,000 tractors. Today they have 3,940,000 or more—over four times as many. Today there are 2 1-2 times as many trucks on farms as in 1930—nearly seven times as many milking machines—ten times as many mechanical corn-pickers—thirteen times as many grain combines.

Conservation, with government help, is transforming the future for farmers. Last year more than 2,600,000 farmers carried out one or more soil or water conservation practices, in complete contrast to the old days of mining the soil and devil take the future.

Research, greatly expanded by Democratic government, has proved of tremendous value. Hybrid corn returns about \$1 billion a year; total research costs were \$10 million. Cotton-ginning improvements save \$25 million a year, at a cost of \$200,000 a year. Phenothiazine, a remedy for internal parasites of livestock, saves \$10 million a year. Research cost: \$10,000. Invest a mite in research, and get a pound.

Yields, as a result of these different forms of progress, have increased for crops by more than 40 per cent in the past 25 years. Milk per cow is up 25 per cent. Eggs per hen are up about 50 per cent. Increased yields add \$10 billion a year—nearly a third—to gross farm income.

Efficiency of work has also increased—by 75 per cent since 1932 in terms of farm output per man-hour.

Cooperation—the democratic way—has replaced the old dog-eat-dog competition of Republican theories. Today, farmers cooperate not only in the REA, the Federal Land Banks and production credit associations, but also vote democratically on marketing quotas. Elected committeemen administer the price support and conservation programs.

Instead of being independently free to go broke, farmers are now independently and cooperatively free to prosper.

VI. Farm Workers Have Shared In Progress

Today, farm workers are better off than ever before. Farm wages have increased from 13c an hour in 1931, and their purchasing power has nearly doubled. Farm workers, moreover, now have a much better chance to get ahead.

When farm wages started to rise some farmers objected, but by now nearly everyone sees not only the justice but the necessity that all share in prosperity and progress. Farm prosperity is based largely on high incomes and wages among city workers who

buy food and clothing. High factory wages in turn lead inevitably to high farm wages.

The truth is that we must all go forward together. And that is the purpose—the achievement and the future progress—of Democratic government. Democratic government works not as the tool of any one group, but toward prosperity and justice for all.

In agriculture, Democratic government recognizes that much still remains to be done. The price support program must be strengthened and made more effective. The problem of supporting prices of perishables must be solved.

The conservation program must be completed. The farm telephone program must be pushed ahead as soon as materials are available, and electrification must be carried completely through. Farm incomes, particularly those of the poorer farmers, are still too low compared to the incomes of other groups. They must be raised.

Under Democratic government, farmers have come a long way. Under Democratic government, they will advance even further in the future. The farmer's only insurance for continued progress lies in Democratic government.



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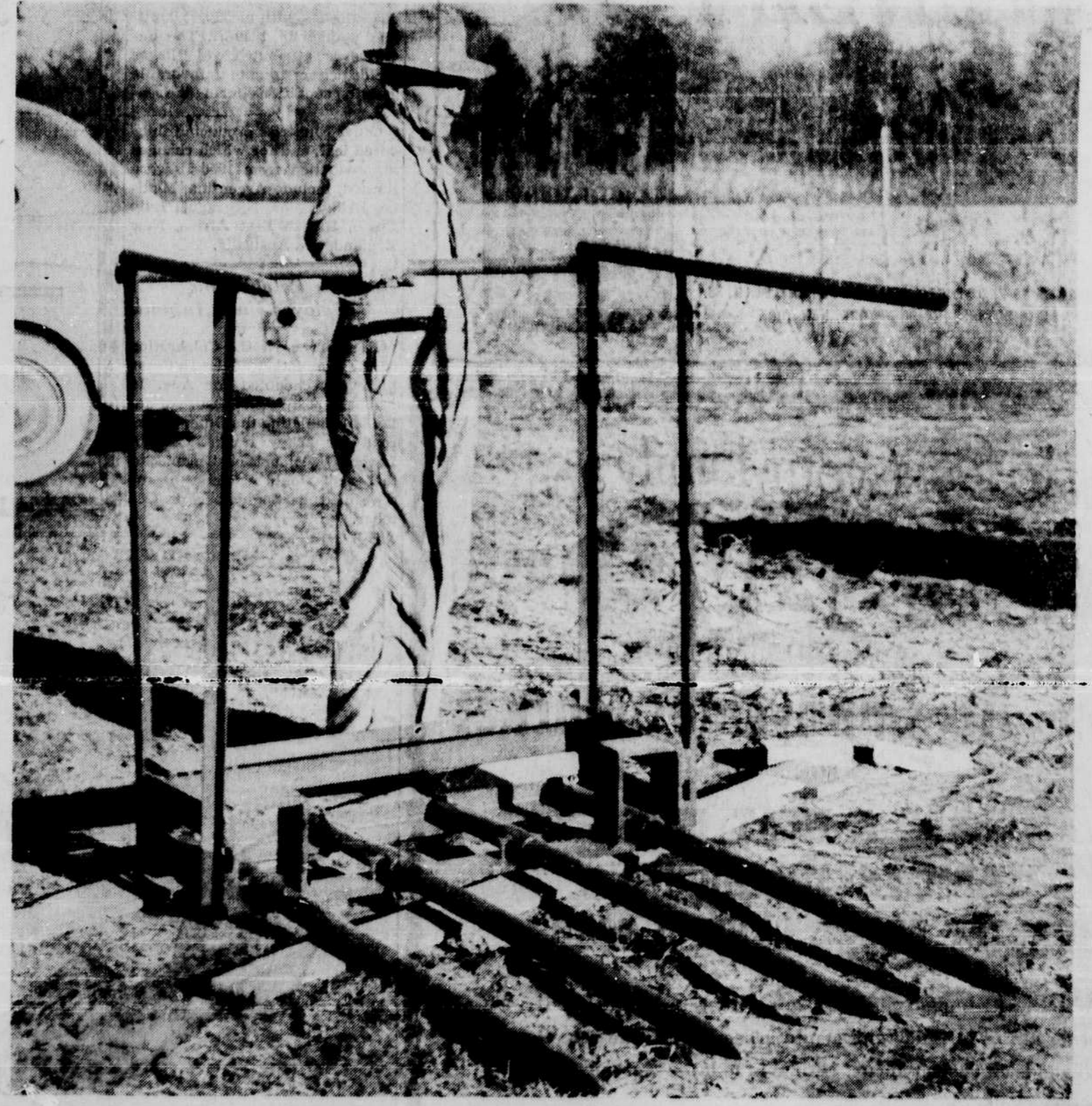


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