

A REPORT ON THE
**UNITED FARMER &
RANCHER CONGRESS**

SEPTEMBER 11-13, 1986, ST. LOUIS, MO



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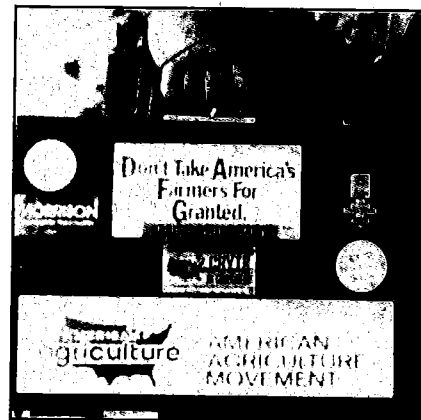
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UPDATE



January 15, 1988

In the past 15 months since the United Farmer & Rancher Congress, farmers and ranchers have continued their work organizing and educating citizens and lawmakers about their vision of a successful farm policy. This work has had a direct impact on both national and state legislation aimed at relief and recovery for family farmers. Some of the policy recommendations endorsed by the UFRC have been drafted into legislation and are moving through state legislatures and the U.S. Congress.

In December of 1987, farmers and ranchers won passage of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, which provides debt restructuring, mediation and borrowers rights. This legislation includes many of the recommendations from the UFRC Credit working group, including a number of key affirmative action proposals initiated by Congress delegates. Tens of thousands of farmers and ranchers can

use this legislation in their efforts to keep their operations going.

State legislatures have passed laws establishing credit mediation services that will save hundreds of farmers from foreclosure as well as groundwater protection and innovative soil conservation programs.

For many farmers and ranchers, the UFRC reinforced the importance of staying informed and involved in electoral politics in order to protect their rights. Shortly after the UFRC, the non-partisan League of Rural Voters Education Project coordinated Farm Vote '86, an effort designed to educate rural voters and urge them to vote. Over 20,000 people participated in rallies organized around a national TV satellite broadcast featuring Eddie Albert. As a result of Farm Vote '86, the farm crisis became the key election issue in many states and rural voter turnout nationwide was impressive. In South Dakota, rural voter turnout surpassed all previous records and made the critical difference in the election of a pro-family farmer Senator.

The UFRC kicked off a new wave of cooperation among farmers and ranchers, which led to the formation of new alliances and organizations throughout the country. The Rural Outreach Coalition of Kansas grew out of the UFRC. So did the Nebraska League of Rural Voters. The UFRC led to the formation of new state chapters of the American Agricultural Movement in Louisiana and Idaho. Shortly after the UFRC, farmers and ranchers in South Dakota held a statewide 'Farmers and Ranchers Congress' to plan ways to work together. The UFRC offered a neutral meeting ground for several national farm groups, resulting in closer cooperation and greater unity than ever before.

And the UFRC offered an unprecedented opportunity for U.S. farmers to expand their base of support by developing new coalitions: with environmentalists, with farmers from other countries, and with their urban neighbors.

The UFRC working group on Conservation and the Environment provided a forum for farmers and environmentalists



to meet and discuss their shared concerns about the need to reduce the dangers and usage of toxic chemicals. These discussions led to the formation of a new farmer/environmentalist coalition, which has developed joint action and public education campaigns over the past year. In Indiana, members of this coalition recently launched a 2-day press tour to publicize the growing danger of toxic chemical contamination in both urban and rural areas in the state.

An International Farm Crisis Summit held in conjunction with the UFRC created a framework for examining the global implication of the U.S. farm crisis. In the past year, farmers from the U.S. and around the world have started to discuss ways to work together, and have begun coordinating their lobbying at the international trade negotiation now being conducted in Geneva.

Finally, farmers and ranchers have continued to build links with their urban neighbors, who, as taxpayers and food consumers, are indirect victims of the farm crisis. The Missouri Rural Crisis Center is working with a statewide low-income group based in St. Louis on a project to reduce black land loss in the state, and has developed close alliances with labor unions. The National Council of Churches has also helped build an urban base of support by organizing a series of urban/rural conferences held over the past year in New York, Los Angeles, and Atlanta.

With passage of the Agricultural Credit Act and various state laws, we've

won half the battle. But the remaining half is yet to be won. Two of the most important issues are fair prices and supply management. Until farmers get a fair price for their goods, even the most efficient farmers will have trouble surviving. And the majority of family farmers believe mandatory supply management is essential to the long-term prosperity of the family farm.

In Montana, the Northern Plains Resource Council conducted a poll in the fall of 1987 that found overwhelming support of higher prices for farm products and a chance to vote on a supply management program.

- 75% of eastern Montana wheat growers surveyed disagreed with reducing wheat loan rates and target prices as mandated in the 1985 Farm Bill
- 82% of those surveyed believe producers should have the opportunity to vote on a supply management program.

The UFRC succeeded in achieving its goal; to provide a place where farmers and ranchers representing thousands more in their respective states could meet to share ideas, work out disagreements, and move forward in unity. This was a giant step forward in the effort to return financial stability to America's family farm system. The agenda is set—the work is unfinished.



ORGANIZING FOR THE CONGRESS



"Today's farm crisis is rooted in the dismantling of those federal farm programs initiated during the 1930's in response to the Depression, which were both cost-effective and designed to generate a fair price. In contrast, farm programs of the last three decades have been designed to enforce low market prices for farm commodities. The resulting cheap raw materials play a strategic role in US trade and diplomatic policies, bringing tremendous profits to multinational, monopoly grain traders and food processors.

Today's federal farm policies, designed to ensure cheap raw materials here and abroad, are destroying the family farm system of agriculture. Never before, not even during the Great Depression, have we experienced such destruction of the social and economic structure of rural America." (Carol Hodne, NAFA)

In September of 1986 nearly 2,000 farmers and ranchers traveled by plane, bus, rail and car from all over the United States to be in St. Louis, Missouri, for

three days at the United Farmer and Rancher Congress. They represented rural America in crisis, and they came searching for solutions.

The idea of a Farm Congress was originally presented to Farm Aid in a variety of forms by several individuals and organizations. Farm Aid considered the idea carefully and, in February of 1986 Willie Nelson sent out an invitation on behalf of Farm Aid to all leading farm organizations, asking them to come to a planning meeting. From this meeting came the Steering Committee of the United Farmer & Rancher Congress.

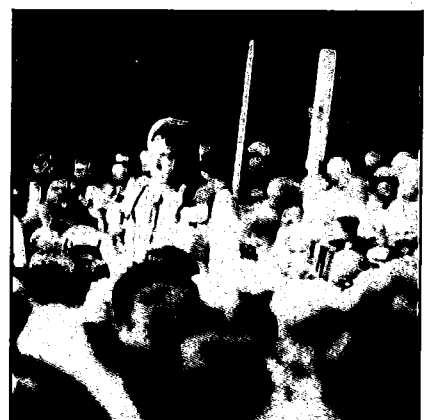
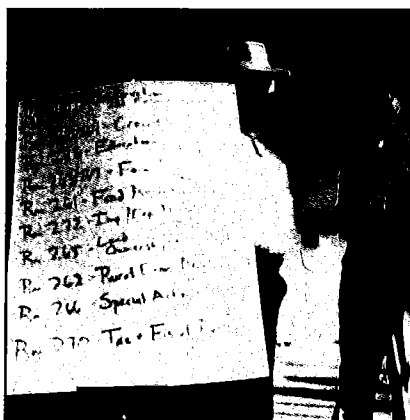
Over the next few months the Steering Committee continued to meet. The Congress was planned as a grassroots event, with ideas and solutions coming from the bottom up.

Because the success of the Congress depended on a consensus regarding farmers' needs, an organizing program was developed to enable participants to listen to each other, air all concerns and to find unity. In June, 32 regional coordinators, representing regions that cover

the continental United States, met and were trained.

Each regional coordinator was responsible for organizing 15 community caucuses to be held during July and August. At each caucus, one delegate for every ten people present was elected to go to the Congress.

It was quite a challenge to organize 15 caucuses in a period of two months. First, each regional coordinator contacted all concerned organizations and individuals in the area, and those interested in participating formed the core organizing group for the local caucus. A local leader was selected, the site and time of the local caucus was established and a pre-meeting of the core group was called. At the pre-meeting the caucus was carefully planned by all, and the tasks for organizing and publicizing the caucus divided. When a pre-meeting was not feasible, all of this work had to be done by phone. The intent of this procedure was to involve anyone who wished to be involved. It was open and welcoming. Notices of the caucuses



went up at feed and seed stores, supermarkets, churches, health clinics, and libraries.

Each caucus was a two and a half hour meeting divided into two sections, the resolution process and the election of delegates. After introductions, the regional coordinator handed out a workbook on the farm crisis and presented a slide show on farm policy. The participants were asked: What struck you most in the show? What surprised you? What did it say that you wanted to have said? What more would you want said? A discussion followed of present problems and future hopes.

The coordinator then asked permission to follow a structured model designed to bring out more ideas about the causes of the farm crisis and what the people in the room thought the solutions to the crisis might be.

Issues facing agricultural families were named by the people at the caucus and written out on large wall cards by the coordinator. These issues were grouped into categories, e.g., import/export, price, land ownership, and so on. Each category was examined for its underlying problem.

Then the coordinator asked everyone to envision his or her future: What do you want the future to look like? Is the grass green? Are there new buildings in your town? What is YOUR idea of prosperity? Given your vision of the future, what should be done to resolve these major problems? What actions need to be taken locally and nationally?

Everyone wrote down three to five actions to resolve the problems, and then split up into small teams. Together these teams listed out key actions to be taken. These were put on cards for wall display. Once again the data was grouped into similar categories. Major problems had been identified, and potential actions suggested. At this point the meeting was generally ready to agree upon the resolutions it wished to bring to St. Louis.

The resolution process was exciting for organizers. They discovered that each group had its own distinctive character and style. The grassroots foundation that was laid in local meetings was fundamental to the success of the Congress. Individual expression was encouraged while unity was discovered on the common ground of all farmers afflicted by crisis.

The second part of the caucus was delegate election. Two types of delegates were elected: 1) producer delegates, who were farmers or ranchers, and 2) rural community delegates, who might be teachers, clergy, farmers' co-op representatives, or small business people living in a rural area. To ensure that "producer delegates" made up the bulk of the Congress, there was no limit set on the number of producer delegates to be elected (within the 1:10 ratio), but only one rural community delegate could be elected per caucus.

Every effort was made to see that there was minority representation in the delegates elected proportional to the number of minorities participating in

the caucuses, and that the delegation was evenly divided between women and men.

There was no nominating process. People attending the caucus who wished to run for delegate and who met eligibility requirements could simply file to run. For every ten people at the caucus, one delegate was elected to represent them at the Congress. Nationally, 600 meetings were held and over 1900 delegates were elected to attend the Congress.

The task of each delegate was to further the development of an agricultural policy that was truly representative of the interests of American farmers and ranchers. At the Congress, delegates assisted with this process of condensing the hundreds of resolutions gathered from around the country into final policy statements that the entire Congress could agree on.

In order to condense the hundreds of resolutions, "break-out" groups were formed which covered every major concern addressed by the resolutions that had been mailed in from all across the country. The break-out groups met for hours—arguing, discussing, and finally hammering out a final set of resolutions regarding their particular topic. Each group made a final recommendation to the Resolutions Committee, which met to formulate the final resolutions. These were read and voted on in the last plenary session of the Congress and are published at the back of this booklet.



PERSONAL, POLITICAL & PHILOSOPHICAL



Regional coordinators organized the caucuses which produced delegates from all over the continental United States. Without their dedication and long hours of work, the Congress could not have taken place. It was largely their gift for working with fellow farmers that made it a success. This is how some of the people who helped shape the Congress saw it.

ILENE MEYERS IDAHO REGIONAL COORDINATOR

My husband was raised on our farm and we took it over from his parents. We were doing very well—we weren't overextended, our production credit association was. They started by foreclosing on farms with equity, though eventually they got to everyone. At first we felt we were loners. They're very good at blaming the farmer, saying you're a poor manager. We felt we were the only ones, especially in our area. We went into bankruptcy proceedings, and I called on

our Representative for help. Together we organized a meeting, and it was then that we began to hear stories from other states.

The Congress gave us a big boost in Idaho. Since then farmers have learned that their biggest problem is being too productive and not well organized—now that's beginning to turn around.

HAL HAMILTON KENTUCKY/TENNESSEE REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Of course, there's the obvious comparison between today and the '30s. Out of the last major depression farmers won the New Deal legislation that raised farm prices and established government priorities to insure prosperity. But the New Deal policies began to be dismantled in the '50s. Farm policy since then has been determined by a few large food processing, trading, and wholesale corporations. And while farmers have been going bankrupt, these companies are doing very well. Cargill, for example, the largest of the five major grain companies

in the world, increased its profits by 66% in 1985-86. Farm policy is in large part determined by these companies; I hesitate to call them "middlemen" because they are such enormous enterprises.

The '70s were an important period in the development of this crisis: export markets increased, there were worldwide high commodity prices, good borrowing and buying power everywhere. We were selling all over the world. There was an inflationary spiral in land and asset values (such as machinery). We had debt-fueled inflation: individual farmers weren't making more money, but on paper every year their net worth went up and they were encouraged to borrow and expand. As you may remember, Earl Butz, Nixon's Secretary of Agriculture, said, "Get big or get out."

The sector of agriculture that got on the growth bandwagon was a minority, yet there was an overwhelming sense that it was a good time to go into farming. A lot of young people, including myself, got started then. The older generation didn't mind taking out a mort-



gage to help. The farm debt went from \$50 billion in 1970 to \$220 billion in 1981. In 1981, commodity prices began to fail in a worldwide recession. The government was controlling inflation by jacking up interest rates which, of course, had a big negative effect on highly leveraged farms. Interest rates rose, prices dropped, consumption dropped, jobs and farms were lost.

CRAIG SEVERTSON

SOUTH DAKOTA REGIONAL COORDINATOR

South Dakota is primarily an agricultural state. Up through 1979-80 things were still okay in South Dakota. Nationally in '81 and '82 a peak was reached: land values were high and ranchers and farmers were living on appreciated equity. In '82 the downward slide began; farm sales began. By '84 you could look on Sunday in the state's largest paper and find three or four pages of farm sales.

Unfortunately, it wasn't difficult to organize for the Congress because so many farmers and ranchers felt the pressure of the farm crisis. We had anywhere between 20 and 90 people at a caucus, with 17 caucuses in all, some on reservations. You could tell the level of crisis in an area by the number of people who showed up.

The greatest achievement of the Congress was communication and networking. People came away with a sense of what it would take to get things done politically. People who hadn't acted before were spurred on, and we came

back to South Dakota knowing who to call for information or political pressure. You don't develop real leadership and get people to come together until there is a great problem.

Since the Congress, we've had one general meeting with many delegates present, a lot of whom are working on both state and federal legislation. You know, South Dakota came into the farm crisis later than Minnesota and other surrounding states and was a step or two behind, so the Congress had a particularly strong influence here. It gave South Dakota a big push in getting organized.

BETTY FUSCHER

NEBRASKA REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Organizing the meetings proved to be quite a challenge. The state of Nebraska is long, so I decided to set the meetings up in a big swing, going along the south and then turning up north and coming home. All the meetings were arranged and set up. About the time I was ready to start, the calls started coming in and the dates were being changed on me. I ended up running all over the state helter skelter, but got it all completed anyway. We had meetings in the mornings, afternoons and evenings, any time they could arrange them. But the morning meetings were the best attended. As soon as people realized it was their meeting and they were not there to listen to someone but to have a say in what was going to happen, they became very responsive and excited. For me, the Congress itself

should have been a feeling of ending a period of very hard work, but it wasn't that at all. It felt like the start of something, not the end.

Most of the delegation from Nebraska are still working together as a unit. We are now incorporating as the Nebraska League of Rural Voters, which is the vehicle needed to keep this group working together for the long term. I am also one of the original organizers of the Nebraska Unity Coalition. In April we're now five months old and have farmer organizations, labor groups, church and peace groups—35 in all—working together. The Nebraska delegation realized that we cannot change policy overnight and when we do get better farm legislation we must stay active to keep it. Our farmers and ranchers have realized that there is a political side to farming that needs constant attention.

SUSAN BRIGHT

INDIANA REGIONAL COORDINATOR

How did I feel about the Congress? I was in awe of the whole thing. It was a funny feeling being there—like they must have felt at the first Continental Congress. It sounds corny, I know, but one of my kids is a history nut and we talk about that. We didn't get a lot of publicity with the United Farmer and Rancher Congress, but neither did the first Continental Congress and its importance wasn't just of that moment, it showed up down the road.

Indiana is a conservative state. We



had 54 delegates to the Congress. That was a feat and a milestone. It wasn't what I did. People were looking for something, grasping at straws. The bubble was about to burst and a lot of them were becoming aware they wouldn't be able to keep farming in any capacity.

There wasn't anyone in our group who wasn't impressed with both the form and content of the Congress, and the speakers. They got the sense that they can do something, but they also saw that it's not going to happen till they get involved. That's what the Congress told them.

LLOYD REESER
ILLINOIS REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Power groups such as international banking and corporate money interests have taken direct aim to eliminate family farming as we know it. The ones at the top would like to see those of us on the lower end of the ladder destroyed.

There is no entity that is not threatened by the belief that only the most powerful should survive. The more powerful feed on those who are less powerful. When there's nothing left on the bottom to support the top, it will self-destruct. The farm crisis is part of this greater phenomenon.

The UFRC represented the more common, decent "American" belief that we know and accept: a fair return for input. I'm 66 years old, I've been involved in farming all my life, and I'd say the farm crisis began in the early '50s, when we went off the parity structure. If we had a parity economy we

would find real economic and social growth. The delegates to the UFRC definitely want the kind of economy where everyone gains equally.

SHIRLEY SHERROD
GEORGIA/SOUTH CAROLINA REGIONAL
COORDINATOR

With drought and low prices, most operations in Georgia, especially black farmers, but many white farmers too, were so close to foreclosure that an idea like the United Farmer and Rancher Congress was desperately needed.

I covered two states, Georgia and South Carolina. I got help from the Federation of Southern Cooperatives in organizing and finding contacts, especially in South Carolina which I'm not as familiar with. I had 68 delegates in all, about half black and half white. We were pleased with the Congress. I felt happy because not only did I go with two states, I also had men and women, black and white—and they all worked well together.

People in Georgia have had two meetings since the Congress, and they've continued to be interracial. A lot of my work now is trying to keep farmers afloat. I help people prepare and go to hearings with the Federal Land Bank and the FmHA. I meet with people in seven counties—we have training on legal problems, farm and home plans, alternative crops, things like that.

The Congress helped farmers in Georgia to see that farmers all over the country may have different crops, but they have the same problems. There was

a sense of togetherness. It takes a little of the selfishness and independence away. Before, farmers around here wouldn't fight for an issue regardless of its effect elsewhere; now they think in national terms.

The Congress also pushed white and black farmers together quicker than would otherwise have happened. You know, we had a farmers meeting, not a black and white meeting.

LINDA CURRIE
KANSAS REGIONAL COORDINATOR

In Kansas I heard two major concerns wherever I went, both urban and rural: the need for unity and the need to educate the public. The public needs to know what will happen if this continues. We have 600 small towns, 25 service centers and 4 major cities. We're losing those towns and the rest will follow in an agricultural state like Kansas.

Kansas farmers were inspired by the Congress. The Rural Outreach Coalition of Kansas came out of the Congress. The majority of board members were delegates. Funding will back up emergency services such as food collection and distribution, volunteer health services, and area support groups where families in crisis can meet every week. We've found that others who have been through it are more help to farmers than professionals who they tend to feel branded by. Farmers can respond to psychologists and ministers by saying: "I'm not crazy," or, "I don't want to be preached to." In support groups we go to farm sales with



people, we provide information about bankruptcy, we'll get a lawyer to come talk, we'll mediate by going to the bank with the borrower.

I stay in tune with legislation and the support groups write letters. It gives people hope: they can do something within the system to change it, learn options for their own lives, and make something positive out of this very negative thing that's happening to them. Kansas is losing 68 farms every week, and according to the U.S. Department of Labor, at least three jobs are lost every time a family farm is liquidated. One business fails for every ten farms lost. We lead the nation in bank closings here. Kansas is mostly agricultural, especially the north central region where they are trying to settle a nuclear dump site for seven states. These things have really brought unity. People have learned they must stand up and say no, and there have been a lot of unexpected coalitions. Farmers are learning we can have a say in our future.

STANLEY HARDEN

GEORGIA FARMER AND DELEGATE

In a sense, the issue sessions on Friday afternoon were similar to the meeting at which I was elected. I went to the session on International Trade—our Georgia group was very concerned about foreign imports and this meeting was a real eye-opener for me. For example, one major point referred to the importation of beef and how the USDA regulations are often evaded by bringing meat in through Puerto Rico, designated for the United States. Not only meat is handled in this

way, but a lot of other products, too. We also discussed how EPA regulations on controlled substances are not enforced on imports. There are USDA standards for so many chemical parts per million for domestic food, but, for example, semi-processed products can be imported without any regulations.

These were the kinds of issues we discussed and I felt the final condensation into resolutions was a good job. It was well organized but didn't seem already drawn up to be rubber stamped—it was a working Congress. The resolutions did reflect regional interests but with a little give and take I think everyone's concerns were able to be met. One good example is the time spent in the issues sessions on the minority farmers. I spoke to one woman from Oklahoma who had had no idea there were black farmers in her state. I think eyes were opened. The plight of minority farmers was addressed in most of the sessions and in the final resolutions which I felt were balanced and well impacted.

DAVID SENTER

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Congress recharged people who have been involved in organizing around this farm crisis since the very beginning. We founded the American Agriculture Movement in October/November of 1977, and in February of 1978 we had organized a rally on the Capitol in D.C. that was attended by 50,000 farmers; there were smaller rallies at the same time in many states. We could see already at that time that the leaders of

the new agricultural policy were going in the direction of corporate farming: bigger is better, and we felt since the farm crisis was being caused by the federal government the solution would have to come out of Washington, too. In 1979 we had a tractorcade and a march that brought 6,000 tractors and pickups from all over the country to Washington for a month.

That was almost ten years ago. There was an emotional high that people brought to those first demonstrations, and we saw the same kind of energy at the United Farmer and Rancher Congress. Of course, it also brought in new people and organizations. The big difference from ten years ago was in our ability to channel the energy. In the beginning there were a lot of people wanting to get involved who didn't know how—didn't know the system, didn't know how to get around politically. Now, with years of experience, and the development of good, level-headed leadership, we were able to have a United Farmer and Rancher Congress which harnessed all that energy effectively. Experience said we had to speak in one voice, avoiding regionalism and single commodity concerns. We had a need for a set of resolutions in which all positions were melted into one, and we accomplished that.

Activists came together from all over the country, creating new communications links within their states and regions. Here at AAM we've had many requests to start new state chapters. In Washington, D.C., there's been a dramatic im-



provement in relations between national membership organizations concerned with the farm crisis. This is all a result of the common purpose achieved at the United Farmer & Rancher Congress.

ELLEN KURZ
FIELD COORDINATOR

Ellen's job was to manage and assist the state coordinators, and to oversee all the caucuses nationwide. She developed the elections process for the caucuses, and together with Toni Kelley ran the training session for state coordinators that took place in June of 1986 in Texas. Ellen also gave a three day preparatory session for state coordinators on the eve of the Congress and ran floor operations during the Congress.

I just want to say that in my experience the majority of those state coordinators were some of the best organizers I've ever worked with. They were so energetic and smart, and professional. They were just incredible. And despite all the pressures they worked beautifully together as a group during the Congress.

Speeches were given by concerned grassroots activists and elected officials throughout the three-day Congress. Below are excerpted highlights.

JIM HIGHTOWER
TEXAS COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

It is a genuine treat, I think, to look out at this audience and see the diversity and the potential that is within this room. A United Farmer & Rancher Congress, the first of its kind in modern times, but a gathering of hard pressed dirt farmers

and hardscrabble ranchers that can trace its roots back directly to the Holiday Movement in the 1930s in this country . . . to the 1870s through the early 1900s in the Farmer's Alliance and the Peoples' Party and the Populist movement.

In the 1930s we got a government that didn't abandon the family farmer, didn't turn its back on the family farmer, but put the government's money where its mouth was and went out there and invested in family farms as we now invest in Chrysler, as we now invest in the big banks of our nation, as we now invest in any Latin American dictatorship that can afford a pair of sunglasses.

Since 1981 half a million farmers have been put out of business. We're losing our farms at a rate of 2,000 a week. We have a government that has turned its back on the family farmer. We see that others have come before us and have done what we must do now—which is to make demands and to organize for economic fairness and social justice in American agriculture, which is all this Congress is about. That's a long, it's a hard, it's an often unappreciated struggle but it's a noble struggle and one we have no choice but to make. Ours is a power struggle over the enormous productive assets and the wealth-generating potential of American agriculture.

TOM HARKIN
U.S. SENATOR, IOWA

Harry Truman said it best: "You know as well as I, when wheat goes up the price of bread goes up, when wheat has fallen

the price of bread didn't go down a bit." He said, "There you have it. That's the policy of big business. Pay as little as you can to the farmer, low prices to the farmer, cheap wages for labor and high profits for the big corporations." And my friends, that is the essential problem with America today. Too many people making money on money, and not enough people making money on farming and mining and manufacturing!

We have a crisis—it's a crisis of who we are as a nation and what we are as a people. It's a crisis of the American Dream that through hard work, thrift and savings we can build for our children a better life, that our children would have work that's rewarding and satisfying. Mind you, I didn't say that our kids would have jobs—jobs isn't the issue. Hell, slaves had jobs! What we want is work that's meaningful work in our society.

EDDIE ALBERT
ENTERTAINER AND FARM ACTIVIST

[The U.S.] Congress sets your price—by law. But this is an illusion, because the people who influence Congress are people who have campaign contributions or a lot of votes, PERIOD. Period. Now the other night I was talking to Congressman Gephardt out in L.A., and I asked him: is it true that for one farmer you talk to there are at least one hundred lobbyists from the food processors talking to you? He said: Maybe more.

You see, your word doesn't mean very much in Congress right now. . . . The



lobbyists walk in and say: "Look, Congressman, it's very tough out there. Consumers aren't buying our products, our bread and our processed foods, our packaging and advertising. We need lower prices in the raw materials." "Oh, is that so?" "Yes, and incidentally here's a \$10,000 check for your next campaign." This is the way it happens. . . . This is why you don't have any protection.

JESSE JACKSON
RAINBOW COALITION

Our demand is for a moratorium on farm and home foreclosures—this is a state of emergency. Our cry is for parity not charity. Farmers are hard-working people. Farmers don't want a handout, they want a helping hand and you deserve a helping hand from the nation that you fed and made great and strong.

A government that is for the people and by the people has to assume its proper role: the role of the protector of the people against large monopolies and corporations. The government has to work to the advantage of all for our future, for our children's future, for the future of our nation and the world. When four companies control about 80% of U.S. exports, government's proper role should be clear; when five companies control 90% of the world's grain trade, the government's role should be clear. Farmers need protection from the corporate exploiters, farmers need parity not charity—our government's role must be clear.

When we dwell together in unity,

when we turn to each other and not on each other, when the women who birthed our nation and bred our nation and manage our nation, when they coalesce with the farmers who fed our nation, when they coalesce with the soldiers who defend our nation, when they coalesce with the youth who inherit our nation, together we are the new majority, we have the power to make America America for all Americans. We have that power when we come together.

JOHN T. O'CONNOR
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST
TOXIC HAZARDS

Since World War II, we have increased farm chemical usage by roughly 100%. In each year, ten or fifteen billion dollars leaves the family farmer and goes into the treasuries of the DuPonts, the Monsanto, the Union Carbides, and the Exxon . . . look at this ill bill of goods they've sold you where pesticides is concerned. Before World War II, you the farmers were losing roughly one third of your crops to bugs. Well, today, after complete chemical saturation of this nation, we are still losing one third of our crops to bugs. Pesticides have not worked . . . certainly . . . we must build in protection for farmers who take up the challenge and begin to use more natural farming techniques . . . beyond saving money and protecting the environment, the reduction of chemical usage on the farm also gives you an important opportunity to establish relationships with the allies you need in urban and suburban

America to win your programs.

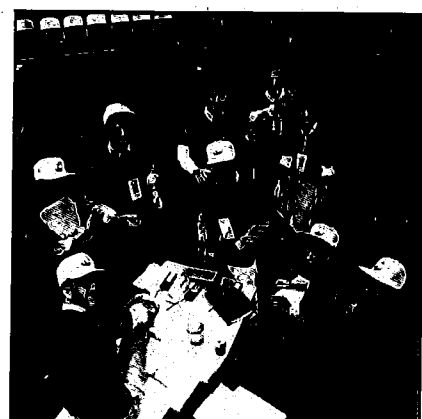
RICHARD GEPHARDT
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, MISSOURI

"It makes me angry, it absolutely makes my blood boil that people in this country who are farmers can make intelligent decisions, can work as hard as they know how, but yet the government has created an environment, an atmosphere in which no matter how hard you work, no matter how hard you try, no matter how many hours you put in, you're doomed to fail because the policy is wrong and it's designed to make people fail—we're going to change that!"

MARK RITCHIE
NATIONAL BOARD CHAIR
LEAGUE OF RURAL VOTERS

The Farmers and Ranchers Congress marked a turning point in the consciousness and political life of thousands of rural people across the country. It represented the first time, since the dark days of the 1930s, that farmers and ranchers gathered from all regions to discuss our mutual problems and to outline a unified plan of action.

What struck me the most was the long-term view taken by most of the delegates. They saw the need for intense work over the next five to ten years to turn agricultural policy around, and they saw the need to be vigilant for the rest of their lives to preserve the rural way of life. It is this long-range vision that makes democracy possible in a nation as large and diverse as the United States.



SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES



THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 11, 1986

4:00-8:00 PM
REGISTRATION

6:30-7:30 PM
REGIONAL CAUCUS MEETINGS

8:00 PM
**OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE UNITED FARMER
& RANCHER CONGRESS**
Toni Kelley, Coordinator

FLAG SALUTE
Gordon Sample, KY delegate

NATIONAL ANTHEM
Jennifer Lyman, MT delegate

OPENING PRAYER

Reverend Merle Boos, Director of Rural Ministry, Division for Mission in North America

ROLL CALL OF STATE DELEGATIONS PRESENT

Howard Lyman, UFRC Steering Committee and delegates from: AL, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WV, WI, WY

ELECTION OF UFRC CHAIR

Anne Kanten, Minnesota Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture
• Adoption of the Rules of Order
• Appointment of Parliamentarian—Ed Trvdy, NE delegate

REMARKS

Anne Kanten

WELCOME

Harriett Woods, Lt. Governor of Missouri

GREETINGS

John Evans, Governor of Idaho (*letter read by Ilene Myers, ID UFRC Regional Coordinator*)
George Wallace, Governor of Alabama (*letter read by W.I. Reid, AL delegate*)

INVOCATION AND REMARKS

Reverend Jesse Jackson, Rainbow Coalition

MUSIC

Jane Sapp, musician and civil rights activist

INTRODUCTION OF STEERING COMMITTEE CALL FOR UNITY

Wayne Easter, President, National Farmers Union of Canada
Wayne Cryts, MO delegate

PRESENTATION

Junior White, Idaho farmer and delegate, donates 4,000 pounds of potatoes to Operation Food Send, Inc. to feed the hungry of St. Louis

CLOSING PRAYER

Max Glenn, Director of the Oklahoma Conference of Churches

RECESS

Anne Kanten, Chair of UFRC

9:30 PM

RECEPTION



FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 1986

7:30 AM
REGIONAL CAUCUS MEETINGS

10:00 AM
GENERAL SESSION
CALL TO ORDER
Chair Anne Kanten

OPENING PRAYER
Reverend Joe Keesecker

FLAG SALUTE
Benny and Mr. Bunting (*oldest delegate*)

NATIONAL ANTHEM

MULTI-MEDIA PRESENTATION
"The Rural State of the Union"

REMARKS
Eddie Albert, entertainer and farm activist

REMARKS
Jim Hightower, Texas Commissioner of
Agriculture

CLOSING PRAYER
Rabbi James Bennett

1:00-4:00 PM
POLICY WORKSHOPS

- Farm Prices
- Credit
- Imports/Exports
- Conservation and Protection of the Environment
- Land Ownership & Control
- Rural Economic Development
- Tax and Fiscal Policies
- Food Assistance, Quality and Safety
- Education
- Direct Action

8:00 PM
CONCERT
Willie Nelson and friends

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 1986

8:00-9:00 AM
REGIONAL CAUCUS MEETINGS

9:30-11:00 AM
REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

12:00 PM
GENERAL SESSION
CALL TO ORDER
Chair Anne Kanten

OPENING PRAYER
Father Norm White

MUSIC
"America" by the Children of God
Choir of St. Louis

REPORT ON RESOLUTIONS PROCESS
Merle Hansen, Chair,
Resolutions Committee

ADDRESS
Bill Cass Stevens, Vice President, UAW

ADDRESS
Senator Tom Harkin, Iowa

RESOLUTION REPORT
PRICING—Corky Jones,
Steering Committee

RESOLUTION REPORT
CREDIT—Mark Ritchie,
Resolutions Committee

RESOLUTION REPORT
IMPORTS/EXPORTS—Mark Ritchie,
Resolutions Committee

RESOLUTION REPORT
CONSERVATION—Howard Lyman,
Steering Committee

REMARKS
John O'Connor, Director, National
Campaign Against Toxic Hazards

RESOLUTION REPORT
LAND OWNERSHIP—John Zippert,
Federation of Southern Cooperatives

RESOLUTION REPORT
RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT—
Mark Ritchie, Resolutions Committee

RESOLUTION REPORT
TAX & FISCAL POLICIES—Mark Ritchie,
Resolutions Committee

RESOLUTION REPORT
FOOD QUALITY & SAFETY—Mark Ritchie,
Resolutions Committee

RESOLUTION REPORT
EDUCATION—Rita Thompson,
Delegate

MOVE TO SEND RESOLUTIONS TO PRESIDENT
REAGAN AND CONGRESS

REMARKS
Senator Tom Harkin, Iowa

REMARKS
Congressman Richard Gephardt, Missouri

CLOSING PRAYER
Mary Ellen Lloyd, National Council
of Churches

CLOSING
Chair Anne Kanten



DELEGATE-APPROVED RESOLUTIONS



The final product of the Congress are these delegate-approved Resolutions which represent many hundreds of hours of work by thousands of farmers and ranchers from all over the country.

WHEREAS Manipulation of prices and supply by speculators, exporters, and commodity traders has contributed to the hardship faced by US producers;

BE IT RESOLVED There should be an investigation into the total marketing system, including the activities of commodity futures traders and speculators on both crop and livestock prices, leading to laws which will curb abuses in the current system, and government crop reports should be released under conditions where they cannot be used by speculators to force down prices.

WHEREAS The disastrous drought in the Southeast is a reminder of the forces of nature that producers must contend with, and that the existing crop insurance program is inadequate to meet our needs;

BE IT RESOLVED Alternative methods of crop insurance be explored, including the creation of a farmer-owned and held disaster reserve.

WHEREAS The leadership of both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees is failing to perform their duties and failing to address the problems of America's family farmers and ranchers;

BE IT RESOLVED Both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees must be chaired and led by strong advocates of family farmers and ranchers, which may require the replacement of current leadership;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That all government programs will be targeted to benefit family farmers and ranchers.

CREDIT

WHEREAS The deliberate setting of farm prices below the cost of production has forced farmers and ranchers to go deeply into debt to cover losses;

WHEREAS Real interest rates for farmers have nearly tripled since the early 70's, primarily as a

result of federal budget deficits and the manipulation of interest rates by the Federal Reserve Board;

WHEREAS The epidemic of foreclosures and bankruptcies which have resulted from low farm prices and high interest rates have forced land, machinery, and livestock values to drop by as much as 50% or more;

WHEREAS This decline in values is a serious threat to the banking system of our nation, with as much as \$50 billion in debt being unrepayable;

BE IT RESOLVED An immediate federal moratorium on farm, small business, and rural bank foreclosures should be enacted, until prices return to profitable levels for a period of at least five years. This is necessary to prevent further liquidations which will force asset values even lower;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED A federal program of mandatory mediation linked with federal and state-government assisted debt-restructuring should be enacted immediately to help keep rural lenders solvent and family farmers on their land, similar to the program in the Farmer's Fair Credit Plan and the Minnesota Mediation law.

WHEREAS Congressionally mandated lenders, like the Farm Credit System and the Farmers Home Administration, are required by their enabling legislation to assist family farmers and ranchers;

WHEREAS These lenders have been found to be deficient in many of their practices, leading to illegal foreclosures, which have resulted in numerous lawsuits, and court settlements which have been extremely expensive for taxpayers;

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BE IT RESOLVED An independent and private audit and investigation of all such lenders should be conducted, including the impact of such practices as variable interest rates, arbitrary land value reductions, favoritism, tiered interest rates, denial of credit on the basis of race, sex, or age, lobbying against fair farm prices, retaliation against producers who are active in the farm movement, failure to exercise forbearance, and the use of bill collection agencies to seize farm family assets. The results of this audit must be made public;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Unbiased administrative law judges be required to preside and rule on all FmHA appeals;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Taxpayer funded bailouts of the Farm Credit System or other lenders should be made conditional upon demonstration that such funds benefit producer-borrowers, including writedowns, restructuring, lower interest rates, and a 2% cap on the spread between their cost of money and what they charge borrowers. They must demonstrate their intention to keep present owners on their land, and that they have recommitted themselves to their original purpose and mission.

WHEREAS State judges often sit on the Boards of Directors of banks and have other similar conflicts of interest;

BE IT RESOLVED That any judge with ownership or managerial interest in any financial institution shall not sit in judgement of any debtor-creditor dispute.

WHEREAS Nearly one-third of our farmers and ranchers are near insolvency, and another one-third are in serious trouble, many of whom will be forced off their farms in the near future;

BE IT RESOLVED All efforts should be made to help farmers who are forced out by this crisis to get back into profitable production. Changes in the US Bankruptcy Code should be adopted, including a deletion of the trustee provision in Chapters 11 and 13, and the adoption of "cram down" provisions. "Returning farmer" programs must be initiated by all leaders, including the provision allowing foreclosed farmers the right of first refusal to buy or rent their land back at current market value.

WHEREAS A number of state legislatures have passed resolutions calling for the repeal of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913;

BE IT RESOLVED Congress should call for an immediate audit of the Federal Reserve System,

and the repeal of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913.

WHEREAS Our rural independent bankers are an important part of our farm communities;

WHEREAS These banks are in deep financial trouble due to the inability of their farmer and farm-business customers to repay their debts;

BE IT RESOLVED Special assistance to independent rural banks shall be adopted by Congress and state legislatures, including the full implementation of existing assistance, like special accounting procedures that permit bankers to write-off bad farm loans over a 15 year period.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Laws preventing the spread of monopoly banks, such as prohibitions on interstate banking, must be strengthened;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Harassment of rural banks and borrowers by the FDIC must end immediately;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED The FDIC be accountable to Congress who shall set rules and regulations to make them accountable.

IMPORTS, EXPORTS, AND FOREIGN POLICY

WHEREAS Imports compete directly with unsold stocks of US-produced agricultural and food products;

WHEREAS Some of these imports are cash crops which are produced by multi-national food corporations on land needed by people in those countries to grow food for their own survival;

WHEREAS Food imports now exceed exports, which are drastically increasing our trade deficit;

BE IT RESOLVED The US must enter immediately into multi-lateral negotiations aimed at achieving "fair trade" among nations, not so-called "free trade" as advocated by the grain trading multi-nationals. These negotiations must insure that US health and safety standards are met, that we are not creating more hunger through our imports, and that we will not further increase our unsold stocks here in the US;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Imports of agricultural and food products should not be allowed into the United States at less than 110% of parity, and this would supercede all multi-lateral agreements.

WHEREAS Agricultural imports compete directly against unsold stocks of US-produced agricultural and food products, some of which are brought into the US without the same health and safety standards required of US producers;

BE IT RESOLVED That imported agricultural and food products must be labeled as to the country of origin to the consumer. Foreign agricultural and food imports must be required to meet the same standards and intent of utilization as required by law in the US;

BE IT RESOLVED The Secretary of Agriculture must enforce the provisions of Section 22 of the permanent farm law, the 1949 Act, in order to protect domestic supply control programs if threatened by imports;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED In those areas of the US

bordering provinces of foreign countries where massive subsidization destroys markets and hurts American farmers, special consideration must be made to make corrective adjustments necessary to prevent the elimination of the farmers in that area.

WHEREAS The United States is an important market for the agricultural production of many developing nations who rely on these exports for foreign exchange earnings in order to service their foreign debts;

BE IT RESOLVED The US should participate in international commodity agreements to help assure fair world market prices for the products of the developing countries in order to maximize their export earnings.

WHEREAS US domination of world trade means we set world prices for most basic commodities, primarily through domestic price and production policies;

WHEREAS When the US sets farm prices below the cost of production, it forces down world prices, reducing foreign exchange earnings of other exporters;

WHEREAS This intentional lowering of world prices by the US forces other countries around the world to increase their production just to service their foreign debt, thereby reducing the market for US exports;

WHEREAS The lowering of US farm prices results in a reduction in US export earnings, due to the relatively inelastic nature of world food markets, further worsening our nation's trade deficit;

WHEREAS The current two-tiered price support program of target prices and CCC loans is an enormously expensive system of export subsidies, costing over twice in taxpayer dollars as the total value of the exports being subsidized. For example, in 1986 US taxpayers will pay over \$6 billion to subsidize corn exports only worth \$3 billion;

BE IT RESOLVED Domestic US farm policies should not be allowed to set world market prices artificially below parity, and we should enter into multi-lateral negotiations with all major exporters and importers of our major export products on issues of price, quality, marketshares, and carryover stocks;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Farm exports should be measured in price per unit of production, total dollars earned and volume.

WHEREAS The reputation of the US as a reliable supplier to the world market has been seriously harmed by our use of political embargos;

WHEREAS The blending of foreign matter into our grain by US exporters has also caused tremendous damage to our reputation;

BE IT RESOLVED There must be a total end of political embargos, and we must stop the intentional contamination of high quality grain and all agricultural and food products with foreign matter as first steps to re-establishing us as a reliable, quality supplier.

WHEREAS Third World development assistance by multi-lateral agencies, such as the World Bank and the IMF, are often based on austerity measures, which reduce the potential market for US goods in affected countries, and on the

replacement of farming to meet local food needs with cash crops for exports, often in direct competition with US farmers;

BE IT RESOLVED The US should not participate in multi-lateral agencies who impose austerity measures which deliberately lower the standard of living or which encourage the displacement of food crops grown for local consumption with cash crops grown for exports;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED US resources should not be used to encourage increased export competition with the expressed purpose of maintaining and increasing profit to US Banks that have loaned money to these countries;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Provisions in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which protect domestic supply management programs for unrestricted imports must be maintained and strengthened in the upcoming round of GAPT negotiations.

CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

WHEREAS Low farm prices set by federal farm legislation have forced many producers to attempt to maximize yields in order to maintain adequate cashflow to pay their bills;

WHEREAS The system of deficiency payment subsidies has been based on the number of bushels produced, thereby encouraging producers to maximize yields to receive the largest subsidy possible;

WHEREAS This intensification of production has included the plowing and planting of unsuitable land, including wetlands, fragile prairies, and other highly erodible land causing severe soil erosion problems;

WHEREAS This intensification of production has included the overuse of fertilizers and chemicals, often resulting in contamination of our water;

BE IT RESOLVED That set-aside acres once designated cannot be used as such again until all other cropable acres of that farm have been set aside, without the permission of the county committee;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That proper land stewardship must be practiced;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Farm commodity programs which force producers to intensify their production, including the setting of low prices and payment of subsidies based on quantity produced, must be abolished.

WHEREAS Insufficient farm income makes it impossible for family producers to maintain adequate conservation measures on their land;

BE IT RESOLVED Producers must receive a great enough return for their crops and livestock to maintain and improve soil and water conservation measures, in addition to covering costs of production and family living.

WHEREAS Below cost of production feedgrain price has resulted in the elimination of many family beef and dairy operations and the replacement of their grazing cattle with crop production of corn, soybeans, or wheat;

WHEREAS These crops are often environmen-

tally inappropriate for the hillsides and prairies where cattle once grazed, resulting in immediate and significant soil erosion and water contamination problems;

WHEREAS Many of our sources of ground and surface water are becoming depleted due to the massive expansion of irrigation over the past decade;

WHEREAS This uncontrolled irrigation has greatly increased the production of crops of which we already have large unsold stocks;

BE IT RESOLVED Irrigation expansion should be controlled at the state level to protect precious water supplies and to prevent the further expansion of crops of which we now have unsold stocks;

WHEREAS Federal farm policies that keep seed grain prices below the cost of production place family beef and dairy producers at a disadvantage;

BE IT RESOLVED Cheap grain policies must be eliminated, and policies to encourage the re-introduction of cattle in place of crops where environmentally appropriate must be implemented;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the enormous damage already caused by the elimination of cattle in certain regions requires immediate remedial action, including educational programs for producers and assistance to local soil conservation programs.

WHEREAS Increased pollution of water and soil from pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers poses a threat to society;

BE IT RESOLVED That stricter standards for testing and licensing of all these products be established and all entities, including government agencies, be required to meet the same standards and be accountable for the testing and licensing of these products.

WHEREAS Disposal of toxic and hazardous materials are damaging human health and the environment;

BE IT RESOLVED That all waste shall be disposed of responsibly, or not produced at all.

WHEREAS Many traditional pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers are proving to have damaging environmental and health effects;

WHEREAS Farmers seek alternatives to these products;

BE IT RESOLVED That increased research and education be undertaken in USDA, Land Grant colleges, and other educational facilities in biological farming, appropriate small farm technology, transitional and non-chemical practices.

WHEREAS Any repository for nuclear or other waste could place farmland and water resources in jeopardy for representative sites;

BE IT RESOLVED No repository can be located in any area where aquifers or surface water supplies or productive farmland can be contaminated. A safe above ground site shall be determined;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That this Farm Congress endorse the efforts of the National Nuclear Waste Task Force in asking for deletion of funds

to Department of Energy until a safe above ground storage is proven safe;

BE IT RESOLVED That no entity, private, corporate, or government, be allowed to evade its criminal or civil responsibility, by any means including bankruptcy, for the pollution or degradation of natural resources.

WHEREAS The new Conservation Reserve program and new swamp and sodbuster prohibitions are steps in the right direction of long-term soil and water preservation;

WHEREAS Proposals for Conservation Easements would also be very beneficial to both producers and future generations;

BE IT RESOLVED The Conservation Reserve program should be expanded, including the increasing of funding to insure that producers are fairly compensated, and a Conservation Easement program should be implemented to further protect our future food supply;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That current deficiencies in the administration of the existing Conservation Reserve program, including the exclusion of highly erodible land which is currently under conservation practice, and problems with the sod and swampbuster programs be addressed by state as well as federal agencies.

WHEREAS The takeover of land by insurance companies, the federal government, other lending institutions, and absentee landowners has proven to be disastrous for soil and water conservation efforts;

BE IT RESOLVED That all efforts be made to keep farmland in the hands of family producers, and to enforce strict conservation requirements on all land foreclosed or repossessed by government or private lenders;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That land foreclosed by FHA, Farm Credit System or insurance companies shall be taken out of production for 10 years unless the original owner can redeem.

WHEREAS Current utilization of oil, high sulfur coal and nuclear energy creates environmental contamination and waste disposal problems; and

WHEREAS High oil imports cost this nation \$40 billion and up annually;

WHEREAS Proper technology is now available to develop a strong conservation program in the process;

BE IT RESOLVED That a program should be developed that will have a sustainable food and energy system to utilize farm products for food and fuel that will also enhance conservation of soil and water, and air quality.

WHEREAS Water resources are insufficient in quantity and quality in different areas of the country;

BE IT RESOLVED There must be adequate funding for PL 566, and that expenditure priorities be given towards construction of facilities rather than administration in drought areas.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

WHEREAS The ownership and control over their

land is the most fundamental need and right of family farmers and ranchers;

WHEREAS Farmers and ranchers have been losing their land at a record pace in recent years;

WHEREAS Black and other minority farmers have faced this crisis much longer and more intensely than others, and now face total extinction within the decade if current policies do not change;

BE IT RESOLVED National policies must be changed to maintain a maximum number of owner-operated family farms and ranches;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Specific land reform measures must be established to assist displaced producers to get back into agriculture;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Special assistance to limited resource farmers must be strengthened.

WHEREAS Black farmers are losing their land two-and-one-half times faster than white farmers, with the real danger that there will be no Black farmers left by the year 2000;

WHEREAS The 1982 US Civil Rights Commission study, entitled "The Decline of Black Farming in America," reported many actions and inactions on the part of USDA, and particularly the Farmers Home Administration, that have contributed to this problem;

WHEREAS Black farmers face the same problems as all other farmers, including low prices and high interest rates, and they must face the additional problems of racism and discrimination;

BE IT RESOLVED Discrimination and FmHA and Farm Credit System practices must end immediately, and there must be more minority personnel within these agencies, especially at the county decision-making level, and more minority representation on ASCS, FmHA, and other agricultural advisory committees;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Special programs through the 1890 Land Grant Colleges and community-based organizations should be established to provide special technical assistance services for each county to assist minority, small, and low income producers;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That in the southeast, after offering land in the FmHA inventory to the original owners for repurchase, no less than 20% of this land be made available to new and existing Black farmers with adequate financing;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED The Department of Justice must insure that the rights of all minorities to equal opportunities in dealings with agricultural lenders and programs, public and private, are protected.

WHEREAS The Native American people in the United States have lost over 88 million acres of land since 1887;

WHEREAS The Native American farmers and ranchers are losing their lands because of liquidation and foreclosure, and that literally thousands of these Indian ranchers are being forced to vacate their ranches and farms; and

WHEREAS The tribal economies of these agricultural tribes are facing receivership and bankruptcy;

BE IT RESOLVED That national policies be established to deal with Native American governments to insure that Indian owner-operators be maintained.

WHEREAS The current economic crisis in agriculture is forcing many producers to sell their farms at extremely low prices;

WHEREAS Many of these farms are being bought by non-farm investors, lending institutions, and foreign corporations;

BE IT RESOLVED All efforts be made to restrict and control foreign and non-farm corporate ownership of farmland, including the strengthening of existing anti-corporate ownership laws.

WHEREAS In the 1930's a great deal of land was foreclosed on and then resold to the original owners or sold to others without the mineral rights, which was a grave injustice;

BE IT RESOLVED Mineral rights should stay with the land.

WHEREAS Lenders are repossessing huge amounts of agricultural land in every state of the nation;

WHEREAS Farmers being displaced are victims of our government's policy of rigged low prices;

WHEREAS Land reform is essential to putting families back on farms;

BE IT RESOLVED Land foreclosed by any lender be resold to the original owner or, with their permission, to immediate family.

WHEREAS The US government has increased and continues to increase its acquisition of private lands through foreclosures and repossessions;

WHEREAS The US government's acquisition of private lands increases taxes to its citizens by reducing the revenues to local communities;

BE IT RESOLVED All efforts be made toward the return of government-owned agricultural and timber lands acquired by foreclosure or repossession. Where possible, this land should be made available through a new "National Homestead Act."

WHEREAS Tenant farmers who have developed their rented land in order to build up their bases, often lose access to this land;

BE IT RESOLVED Tenant farmers must not suffer economic hardships when they lose their rented land, and some adjustment shall be made in future farm programs for tenant farmers to obtain a "qualifying base" on newly rented land.

WHEREAS The Federal Government is growing crops on military bases;

BE IT RESOLVED The Government shall be prohibited from growing crops or leasing such military land;

WHEREAS Currently a significant number of agricultural land acres are being developed for non-agricultural uses;

WHEREAS Taxes on agricultural land in many areas are based on values other than the agricultural value of the land;

WHEREAS The accelerated and non-restrictive development of land for permanent non-agricultural purposes is detrimental to the nation;

BE IT RESOLVED The government should offer incentives to farmland owners to keep their land in agriculture.

WHEREAS BLM and Forestry Departments are systematically denying permit holders water rights and erosion control improvements and denying existing grazing rights;

BE IT RESOLVED Federal and state governments shall take steps to insure protection of the land and grazing rights.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS The ripple effects of low farm prices are being felt all across rural America, as businesses, schools, churches, and local governments are hurt by farmers' inability to shop, support their children, or to pay their bills or taxes;

WHEREAS This has led to the closing of many rural and agriculture-related businesses, banks, churches, hospitals and other community services, thereby creating the loss of many jobs;

WHEREAS This loss of businesses and community services has led to the destruction of whole towns, and the forced exodus of rural residents to the cities in search of work and adequate services;

WHEREAS The de-population of rural America is enormously wasteful, with the abandonment of existing rural community infrastructure, like schools, houses, roads, sewers, and business facilities on the one hand, and on the other hand creating the need to build new facilities in our already over-crowded cities;

BE IT RESOLVED All federal, state, and local policies encouraging the de-population of rural America be reformed immediately, and that new policies be enacted to stabilize, and ultimately to increase the number of farm families on the land.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Emergency assistance should be made available to currently ineligible persons, like displaced farmers and small business owners, and that special assistance to these individuals be provided by both state and federal governments;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Food stamps, fuel assistance, and other government assistance programs should be made available to all rural people in need, and all factors which often make farmers and business people ineligible for these programs should be removed;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED The United States Congress shall continue to provide adequate funds to FmHA's Farmer and Housing programs, and insure that they are operated as they were originally intended: to help rural citizens;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the US Congress continue to provide adequate funds for the Economic Development Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, the Cooperative Extension Service and other federal agencies important to the rural economy and our way of life.

WHEREAS The production of raw materials for processing is currently the least profitable link in the food and feedstocks chain;

BE IT RESOLVED Processing plants, ethanol production facilities and other value-added industries should be established in rural feedstock areas;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That Federal, state and local governments enact policies that facilitate

financial security for locally controlled cooperatives. Furthermore, policies should be enacted that are supportive of interstate compacts, and that assist farmers to locally produce, process and market new and existing crops.

WHEREAS Nearly one-third of our nation's citizens and voters live in rural America, outside of cities and suburbs;

WHEREAS Rural people have suffered a great deal under the current economic and fiscal programs of our government, with very little say in the decisions which deeply affect our families and our future;

WHEREAS The US Constitution and Bill of Rights guarantee each and every person the right and responsibility of political participation, providing us with peaceful, non-violent means of changing government policies and practices which we find harmful to ourselves and our communities;

BE IT RESOLVED In order to reverse current economic and social policies designed to liquidate many family farmers and ranchers, and to replace these with Parity Farm programs policies which will restore profitability to family agriculture and prosperity to America, rural residents must actively participate in electoral and grassroots politics;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That to achieve true economic and political democracy in rural America, hired non-family workers in agriculture must receive a fair wage and be afforded the same protective legislation in the areas of unemployment insurance, minimum wage, and health and safety standards in the workplace, and child labor and those rights enjoyed by other workers under the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Rural citizens should reject all calls for violent confrontations and all attempts to blame particular religious or ethnic groups for the rural economic crisis.

TAX AND FISCAL POLICIES

WHEREAS Instead of insuring farmers and ranchers of fair prices in the marketplace, Congress has often enacted tax loopholes supposedly to help producers, but which have primarily benefited non-farm investors and speculators who are buying out family operators forced out by the crisis;

WHEREAS Tax loopholes, and write-offs against non-farm income, have enabled non-farm investors to unfairly compete against family operators, who must earn their living from selling their production at a profit, not by "farming the tax system";

BE IT RESOLVED The current efforts to change the federal tax law should include the elimination of non-farm income write-off provisions and all tax incentives for non-farm investors;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Tax incentives for all sustainable agricultural practices (including forestry and fishing), and soil/water conservation measures should be expanded;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Tax advantages to foreclosures must be eliminated.

WHEREAS Rural communities are facing extreme shortfalls in tax revenues at the same

time that demands for public service are increasing;

WHEREAS The current system of basing school district funding on property taxes is creating an enormous burden on property owner;

BE IT RESOLVED School district financing should be based increasingly on progressive state income taxes;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Property taxes should be altered to be based on productive value of the land;

WHEREAS Federal budget deficits are placing an enormous drain on the credit markets of the United States and around the world, driving up interest rates to farmers and the rest of society;

WHEREAS This deficit is caused by a combination of government spending, tax loopholes which have allowed corporations and wealthy individuals to avoid paying their fair share, and a lack of earned income in the economy, thereby reducing tax revenues;

WHEREAS One of the largest expense items creating this deficit is the fraud, waste and runaway budget of the Pentagon. Some of these Pentagon expenditures are also used to support exploitative foreign regimes under which cheap labor ultimately deprives American workers of their jobs;

WHEREAS Wasteful deficiency payment subsidies used to subsidize US farm exports are a huge part of the deficit, equaling nearly twice the entire amount of Gramm-Rudman cuts in 1986;

WHEREAS The Gramm-Rudman bill is making the situation worse, by diverting the public attention from the real causes of the crisis, and by forcing cuts in specific programs of enormous benefit to the economy;

WHEREAS The only long-term solution to the budget crisis is to restore prosperity to all sectors of our economy, including agriculture and other raw material sectors, not just to defense corporations and multi-national banks;

BE IT RESOLVED The Gramm-Rudman Act should be repealed, and all cuts made be immediately restored;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the federal deficit be reduced by a combination of savings through reduction in Pentagon budgets, elimination of farm deficiency payment subsidies, once parity prices are received in the marketplace, closing of tax loopholes, and fiscal responsibility in government;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That policymakers concentrate on restoring prosperity to the entire country as the primary means of resolving the federal budget deficit crisis.

WHEREAS Inheritance tax remains a barrier to the passing of family farms and ranches down to daughters and sons who want to continue as agricultural producers;

BE IT RESOLVED Inheritance tax law must be reformed to encourage the passing of farms and ranches down between generations.

WHEREAS Changes in the tax laws have a significant effect on production agriculture and rural communities;

BE IT RESOLVED An impact statement, address-

ing the economic consequences of prospective changes in the tax law, be prepared by Congressional policymakers 180 days in advance of their consideration.

WHEREAS Financial losses incurred by agricultural producers are placing many financial institutions in danger of collapse;

BE IT RESOLVED Agriculture producers be permitted to exchange certain tax losses from previous years in lieu of their agriculture debt to lending institutions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED These lending institutions be allowed to utilize these credits to offset future income taxes, thereby averting the need for continued capital infusion into financially troubled agricultural lending institutions.

FOOD ASSISTANCE, QUALITY, AND SAFETY

WHEREAS Hunger and malnutrition have increased dramatically in the United States and around the world, both among urban and rural people and farm families;

WHEREAS Private efforts to serve the hungry, including food banks, pantries and other community efforts are taxed beyond their capacity;

WHEREAS Local community efforts for feeding the hungry should be supported with food and financial means to address local needs;

WHEREAS Stored surpluses of grain and commodities should be released for distribution to domestic and foreign food programs with mandatory accountability;

WHEREAS Millions of men, women, and children who qualify for food assistance are unaware of these programs and are wrongly denied benefits;

WHEREAS Regulations need to be changed at federal levels; County Supervisor interpretations and education of the farmer and Department of Family Services office workers should be mandatory, uniform and nationwide;

WHEREAS Non-producing assets should be deleted from state and federal regulations, and qualifications for assistance shall be based on taxable income base;

BE IT RESOLVED The entire Food Stamp program shall be reviewed and revised nationwide immediately;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Each state delegation at this Farmer and Rancher Congress elect one representative to oversee regulations, organizations, and agencies which affect our agricultural industry;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Food assistance by both state and federal governments should be expanded to insure that no persons go hungry or malnourished. Stored unsold stocks should be released to foreign and domestic food.

WHEREAS The introduction of artificial food products, chemical additives, and food irradiation is expanding quite rapidly, often without regard to full safety considerations;

BE IT RESOLVED Strict health standards be applied to any and all food products, additives, and processes, including imports, and that economic and social factors be considered before approval is given to these products.

WHEREAS Synthetic bovine growth hormones (BGH) are currently being reviewed for authorization for commercial release;

WHEREAS Specific reservations about this technology exist, including effects on human and animal health, high costs of the products and projected increase cost to taxpayer, and the further lowering of milk prices paid to producers, destroying the rural economy in our dairy regions;

BE IT RESOLVED Authorization of commercial release of BGH be deferred and demand that Congress study and consider the full range of consequences before any authorization of BGH or any other synthetic growth hormones.

WHEREAS Prices paid to farmers must be increased to protect family farmers and ranchers and to keep our food system out of the hands of speculators and corporations;

WHEREAS Experience has shown that food processors and distributors have raised retail food prices dramatically whenever farmers have attempted to get fair prices, primarily to pit consumers against farmers;

WHEREAS Retail food prices have continued to rise, even when farm prices have fallen, further alienating farmers and consumers;

BE IT RESOLVED Processors and distributors must not be permitted to raise retail food prices beyond any actual increase in raw agricultural products which result from price increase in the marketplace due to the enactment of a Parity Farm program;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Congress should investigate the price fixing practices of the food industry, and expand anti-trust legislation to allow farmers and ranchers to sue for damages when hurt by monopoly control;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED A mutual education program between farmers and consumers be established to improve communications and cooperation, including the use of commodity promotion funds for this purpose.

WHEREAS The restoration of fair prices in the marketplace to farmers will add approximately \$14 billion to the nearly 350 billion dollars spent on food in the United States, an approximate increase of 4%;

WHEREAS This additional cost may be a burden to the unemployed and others who are unable to support themselves at this time;

WHEREAS The restoration of fair prices in the marketplace will save approximately \$35 billion in deficiency payment subsidies in 1986;

BE IT RESOLVED A significant portion of the funds saved by restoring fair farm prices will be used to purchase US farm products to greatly expand our food assistance programs, including food stamps, WIC, and the school milk and lunch programs to insure that low-income families will not be hurt;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Food Assistance program regulations should be reviewed and revised to insure unified and fair national and state regulations. To assure this takes place, the House Select Committee on Hunger must be reinstated.

WHEREAS Low farm prices have forced many producers to greatly expand their use of fer-

tilizers and chemicals in hopes of expanding production;

WHEREAS There have been numerous incidents of poisoning of farmers, farmworkers, food handlers, and consumers caused by chemical residues;

WHEREAS There is increasing market demand for alternative production methods including low-spray and organic methods;

BE IT RESOLVED Public safety will become a more primary consideration in the promotion of new production methods;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Alternatives to energy and chemical intensive methods of production, including organic and integrated pest management alternatives, must be encouraged, especially if it will lower costs of production and increase health and well-being, including expanded research, training, and extension through the private sector as well as through state and federal governments.

WHEREAS Retail food prices have continued to rise while prices paid to farmers have fallen;

WHEREAS The end result of this injustice is the farmer's share of the food dollar falling, while food prices are at record levels;

BE IT RESOLVED Farmers and consumers should work together in local, producer-controlled marketing cooperatives to lower food costs and to raise the price received by producers, thereby increasing the farmer's share of the food dollar.

RESOLUTION ON EDUCATION ISSUES

WHEREAS There is great need for understanding the Farm Crisis and its effects on hunger and the economy of the nation and the welfare of this nation's people;

WHEREAS The income from raw materials produced by agriculture industries turns over 5 to 7 times in the economy;

BE IT RESOLVED That the economics of agriculture and its importance to the well-being of our nation be taught as an essential component at all levels of our education system.

WHEREAS The research and extension programs of 1862 and 1890 Land Grant Colleges are too often based on a "bigger is better" and a "60 is too old" philosophy and do not utilize the existing resources and skills of the rural citizens;

WHEREAS Agricultural research and extension programs do not adequately serve small, minority and limited resource farmers;

BE IT RESOLVED That taxpayer-funded research and extension programs must be monitored by farmers to assure that they serve the interests of family farms, and that they are operated without discrimination.

WHEREAS It is important that the issues facing rural America, and values which underlie rural life be understood by all Americans;

WHEREAS The media plays a critical educational role in communicating and explaining these issues and values;

BE IT RESOLVED That all research and development work carried out in the Land Grant Col-

lege System must be publicly funded and that at least 50 percent of the R&D budget be allocated to the development of sustainable or regenerative alternatives to present agricultural practices;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That each Congress delegate shall develop a clear strategy for publicizing the results of the Congress when they return home. This should include a "Letter to the Editor" campaign and personal and ongoing outreach to all area media contacts;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That farm groups work with their local media to provide ongoing assistance and resources in covering agricultural issues, and in presenting clear and realistic portrayal of rural life and rural values;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That farm groups must develop educational outreach and exchange programs that will communicate our concerns to urban citizens;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That local rural media outlets must take on the role of providing a "grassroots" communication network on key issues, and providing information on crisis resources and assistance.

DROUGHT IN THE SOUTHEAST

WHEREAS Farmers in the Southeast are hit by the worst drought in a century;

WHEREAS This drought disaster is on top of the worst farm economic disaster in 50 years;

WHEREAS Farmers and rural communities will be losing millions of dollars in lost crop incomes;

WHEREAS In many counties as much as 90-100% of the main cash crops have been lost;

WHEREAS The exodus of family farmers off their land is accelerating to five times the rate of past years in the Southeast;

WHEREAS Present government programs are totally inadequate, first putting farmers in jeopardy with government-imposed low prices, offering only more loans as relief;

WHEREAS The need for direct assistance through hay, grain and seed relief will continue to be needed into the spring and even fall of 1987;

WHEREAS Farmers from the Midwest, North, West and all over our country, who are in desperate need themselves due to the present farm economic depression, have opened their hearts and created a mass movement "farmer to farmer" providing relief and setting an example for government and the rest of the nation;

WHEREAS Farmers have demonstrated to the country what can be done if we unite and join together in finding help and solutions for our emergencies;

WHEREAS Grain bins in the Midwest are overflowing while farmers are starving;

BE IT RESOLVED That an immediate moratorium on all farm and home foreclosures and forced liquidations be enacted;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the federal government make surplus and stored grain available to limited resource farmers at no cost, based on loss and assessed need, but without counting any crop insurance payments; this is done to provide relief to Southeast farmers,

create an opportunity for higher prices for Midwest farmers and lower taxpayer costs;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That our "farmer to farmer" efforts to provide donated hay and grain to farmers in need must continue and build upon the strength of uniting farmers across geographic, racial and commodity lines; and which has shown the power of joint involvement of community organizations, churches, labor unions and citizens groups cooperating to solve problems; and which has the power to generate a more permanent and lasting government supported and financed solution to the drought and other problems facing family farmers in the Southeast.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the US Senate pass H.R. 5288 emergency drought legislation, with the inclusion of the following list of specific changes.

PROPOSED CHANGES IN H.R. 5288 09/04/86

SECTION 2 DEFINITIONS: Add "hail damage" or "excessive hail damage" to the list of disasters in 2.(1).

SECTION 3 EMERGENCY FEED DONATIONS: In 3 (a) add language which distinguishes between contract growers and integrators so that the benefits go directly to the contract growers, esp. in poultry and swine operations. In 3 (b) (1) (A and B) add language to clarify and specify what conditions apply to the Secretary's waiver of the 72-hour supply rule and how the reasonable expectation of significant losses will be determined.

SECTION 4 EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK FEED ASSISTANCE: In 4 (a).(1) add language which extends this coverage to individual farmers and ranchers who demonstrate need even if they are not located in officially designated disaster counties; and change the reimbursement level from 50 percent of cost to 80 percent of cost.

SECTION 5 DISASTER PAYMENT PROGRAM: In 5 (a) add to the list of covered producers so that it includes hay, tobacco, orchards, vegetable crops, etc.

SECTION 6 MILK PROGRAM PRODUCER ASSESSMENTS: Change the language of 6 (a) and (b) so that milk producers do not incur double assessment payments or so that the payments are deferred until the end of the program.

SECTION 7 COST-SHARING FOR SOIL CONSERVATION ETC: In 7 (b) change "not less than 50 percent" to "100 percent."

SECTION 8 PAYMENTS: No changes suggested in the meeting.

SECTION 9 CREDIT FOREBEARANCE: In 9 (1) and (2) the existing "should" and "are encouraging" soft language to "must" and "are required" language. In addition, insert a formula, such as commodity prices falling below x level, which will specifically determine when an area is considered an economic or natural disaster area.

SECTION 10 COORDINATION OF ASSISTANCE EFFORTS: This whole section should be redrafted from its present "sense of Congress" form into specific legislation to bring the coordi-

nation of agricultural disaster assistance into line with the assistance coordination structures already used by FEMA in other kinds of disaster assistance.

DIRECT ACTION

As a result of the United Farmer and Rancher Congress non-violent DIRECT ACTION will be taken coordinated nationwide through a national phone tree headed by the Congress State Coordinator with local input to:

- A. Bring attention to the urgency of the national rural crisis with the citing of specific solutions.
- B. Educate, solicit and mobilize urban and rural support—domestic and international.
- C. Elect pro-family farm candidates on a non-partisan basis.
- D. Lobby and impact state and national legislation.

In conclusion, all people are encouraged to be COURAGEOUS, AFFIRMING, INVOLVED, CREATIVE, and SPECIFIC when addressing DIRECT ACTION.

***NOTE:** This committee recommends that the Coordinators of this Congress compile and distribute a book of successful local direct action with resourceful people listed.

MINORITY REPORT

ECONOMIC & POLITICAL DEFENSE OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

PART II

The Resolution contained in the U.F.R.C. credit platform calling for repeal of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 is not in the best interest of our nation's agricultural economy. Such action would destabilize both credit resources and the general agriculture economy by creating a pork barrel economy in which the wealthy and politically powerful could control both national, fiscal and monetary policy.

An independent Federal Reserve, free from the direct political tom-foolery of Congress and the Presidency is most able to administer and regulate for the good of all classes of Americans. Controlling and regulating a stagnant and sick economy, as we are experiencing today, is no way to win friends. Many diverse groups of Americans blame everything on the Federal Reserve from trade imbalance to inflation. The fact is that the Federal Reserve must administer its policy in an imperfect world made more imperfect by runaway Congressional deficit spending, ill-advised trade policy, catastrophic farm programs, unfair tax policy, etc. The "Fed," in effect of all this, becomes a national lightning rod for the political storms brewing now throughout our nation among many diverse groups of Americans. The Federal Reserve may not be perfectly innocent on all counts, but it does often take unwarranted criticism that would be more appropriately directed at Congress.

We in the farm movement need to launch a public education program to enlighten some of our fellow farmers. Some of our friends and neighbors are obsessed so deeply with the abuses of the Federal Reserve, they have their eyes closed to abuses in other sectors of society and government.

COMPILED AND SUBMITTED BY:

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ILLINOIS DELEGATE, U.F.R.C.
RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE MEMBER

MINORITY REPORT

INFLUENCE ON COALITIONS OF U.F.R.C. PARAGRAPH FIFTEEN OF CREDIT PLATFORM

PART III

Progressive farm organizations, including friends in organized labor, advocacy groups, anti-defamation leagues, etc., have come to be wary of the call to abolish the Federal Reserve. In some instances, those individuals and groups making the call are motivated by a demented, extremist, political philosophy that encompasses anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, and a twisted belief in the dynamics of local economies and local law as the highest order of government. While, certainly, not all advocating an end to the Federal Reserve System are extremist in their political beliefs, "abolishing the Fed" has become synonymous with right-wing, para-military, hate peddlers to many politically active Americans.

Since most of our efforts in organizing coalitions are directed at those people and groups of the more liberal political persuasion, it becomes imperative to discourage the obsession some of our farmers have with abolishing the Federal Reserve System. I doubt many of our farmers could ever hope to qualify as bona fide, first order, extremists, we must be vigilant, nevertheless, in the tone we set in our farm policy. The inclusion of paragraph fifteen of the credit policy of the U.F.R.C. is so inconsistent with the message of the total policy draft, it is somewhat ludicrous. However, the first question emerging from our liberal St. Louis friends was, "Why are farmers so inconsistent in their political beliefs?" "Where are they really, in the political spectrum?"

It is doubt that will prevent successful coalition building. We need more awareness in our farm ranks about the value of good, consistent, political platforms so our friends in organized labor and other supporting groups see us as solid in our political stance and style. Repeal of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913, as is written in the Credit Policy of the U.F.R.C. Platform, makes us appear a trifle confused, if not downright wacko!

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