

Sec. Benson, 'Despiser' of Controls on Crops, Employs More Than All Predecessors

By OVID A. MARTIN
Associated Press Farm Reporter
WASHINGTON in — Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson has stated repeatedly that he dislikes federal crop controls. But circumstances are requiring that he employ them more than any of his predecessors.

He has invoked rigid marketing quotas this year on wheat, cotton, rice, peanuts and major types of tobacco.

Before the year is over, he will have to impose them on the same crops for next year.

Although farmers themselves may or may not like the controls, they have been writing a pretty good record of approving them. The farm law of 1938, authorizing marketing restrictions, requires that they be approved by at least two-thirds of the farmers voting in a referendum.

Since then, the department has held 68 such referenda. In 50 of them, growers approved quotas while in 18 they disapproved.

The circumstances that require Benson to use quota restrictions are the accumulation of surplus crops and a requirement of farm law that the limitations be invoked—subject to grower approval—when oversupplies develop.

By the time this year's harvesting has been completed, upwards of 12 billion dollars worth of farm surpluses are likely to be stored under government farm programs.

Farmers themselves are under great economic pressure to approve quotas, whether they like them or not. If the quotas are approved, the government will support grower prices of the affected crop at a relatively favorable level. But if they are rejected, the support levels are cut to a very low level. In the case of tobacco, price supports are withdrawn completely if controls are voted down.

Hesitate to Vote
Inasmuch as market prices follow closely the support level, many farmers hesitate to vote against controls lest prices drop to depression levels.

In most cases where Benson has invoked controls, he has in effect apologized, explaining his dislike of the idea that farmers be controlled from Washington. Yet, he has never once suggested that the law be changed to eliminate the controls. He has said that he realizes they are needed until war-extended farm production has been adjusted to peacetime demands.

Benson feels that once this adjustment has been achieved, farm production can be guided simply by varying the level of government price supports. Under the administration sponsored flexible price support system, price guarantees are high in times of shortages to encourage production and are low in times of surplus supplies to discourage production and to encourage consumption.

Quota Approved
The department has conducted three referenda this year on quotas. Referenda for other crops produced

under controls this season were held last year.

One this year was for quotas on the 1956 wheat crop. It was approved by 77.5 per cent of the growers voting. Another was on a proposed reduction in previously announced quotas for this year's crop of burley tobacco. It won by a majority of 96 per cent.

The third referendum was on the question of authorizing quotas for the 1956, 1957 and 1958 crops of flue-cured tobacco. It gave an overwhelming majority of 97.3 per cent for controls until the 1959 crop.

Before the year is out, Benson will hold referenda on quotas for next year's crops of cotton and

rice as well as on future crops of such types of tobacco as burley, Virginia sun-cured, Maryland and two cigar varieties.

All Won
Since 1938, the department has held five referenda on quotas for wheat and all won grower approval. There have been nine on cotton quotas, all winning approval. Two referenda have been held on rice controls. The first, which would have covered the 1939 crop, was defeated. The second, held for this year's crop, was approved by a 90 per cent margin.

Four referenda have been held for peanuts—each for a three-year period. All gave quotas approval. Two have been held on quotas on extra long staple cotton, a specialty type. And they were favorable.

Quotas on tobacco have had some what harder times winning grower approval. The department has held 46 tobacco referenda. In 17 of them, farmers turned down the controls. The rejections came chiefly on quotas on minor types of tobacco grown in Northeastern parts of the country, principally those used for making cigars.

Authority Limited
In the beginning, authority to use quotas was limited to crops described as being "basic" to agriculture. These were cotton, wheat, corn, rice, peanuts and rice. None was ever proposed for corn, although there have been times when the supply approached the point where it would have been necessary to invoke quotas.

Last year Congress amended the law to exempt corn from quotas. This action was taken upon the generally accepted contention that it would be impossible to enforce corn quotas because such a large portion of this crop is used as livestock feed on farms where it is grown. The other crops covered by quotas are largely market crops.

On the whole, farmers have given quotas on cotton and flue-cured and burley types of tobacco larger majorities than have growers of other crops.

Matter of Conjecture
Whether the referenda give a true picture of how farmers feel toward the government controls is a matter of conjecture. Often less than half the affected growers go to the trouble to vote now.

In the referendum held a few weeks ago on quotas for the 1956 wheat crop, only about 330,000 of the estimated 1,400,000 eligible farmers voted. This was less than one-fourth. In this case only 18 per cent of the eligible farmers approved the controls. Yet they were able to put the controls on all the growers.

Benson's immediate predecessor as farm secretary Charles F. Brannan, proposed while he was in office that authority to invoke marketing quotas be extended to virtually all farm commodities, including livestock, poultry, eggs and milk.

A bill to carry out his recommendations was sent to Congress, but it was never given serious consideration.

The suit belonged to Glenn Fisher, of Duncannon, who had donated it to a clothing fund for shipment to West Germany. He had forgotten to remove a note containing his name and address from a pocket.

Recently Fisher was surprised to receive a gift package from the German recipient of his suit.

While taking the German newspaper wrapping from the gift, Fisher noticed the word "Pennsylvania" mixed in with the German phrases in one of the news stories. Curious, he had the entire story translated. The translation read:

"Fifteen days ago, farmer Glenn Smith of Pennsylvania, while baling hay, lost his wallet containing \$490. Methodically he searched through every bale of hay. In the 405th bale he found it."

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One explanation was that the bottom collapsed because the limestone farther down had been honeycombed by underground streams.

Accused



WASHINGTON, D. C. — Rear S. Van Fossom, above, in office of an attorney, after being freed on bond following indictment charging he misused a secret Air Force document and then lied about it. Van Fossom was arrested in Washington. Van Fossom resigned from the Air Force last Nov. 23 and was hired the next day as an investigator for the House Un-American Activities Committee. (AP Wirephoto.)

Odd Story Makes Odd Round Trip

DUNCANNON, Pa. (UP) — A lost wallet, 405 bales of hay and a man's suit were involved in this "it's a small world" example.

The well-laden wallet belonged to Glenn Fisher, of nearby Ickesburg, who lost it while baling hay last summer. He had to open 405 bales before he recovered the wallet and money.

The suit belonged to Glenn Fisher, of Duncannon, who had donated it to a clothing fund for shipment to West Germany. He had forgotten to remove a note containing his name and address from a pocket.

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'Bottom Falls' Out of Lake

PADUCAH, Ky. (UP) — The bottom fell out of Boyd Satterfield's four-acre lake.

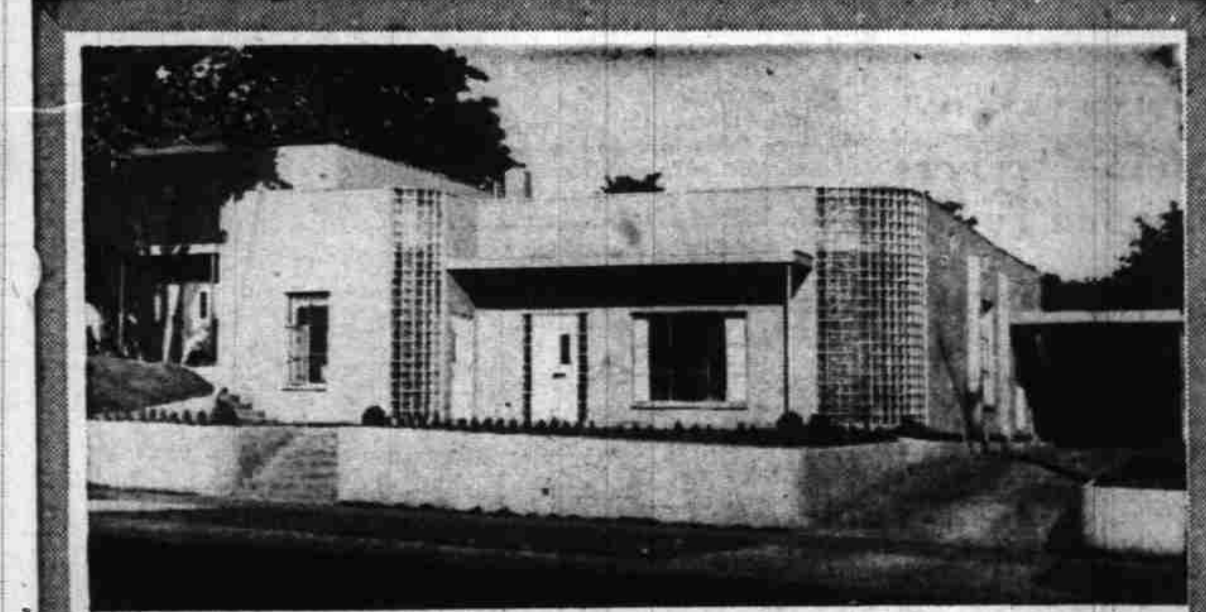
"You could see the water leave, the fall was so fast," said Bill Jones, Satterfield's neighbor. Only puddles remained. A large black hole, of undetermined depth, yawned at one side. It had swallowed the water and many fish.

One explanation was that the bottom collapsed because the limestone farther down had been honeycombed by underground streams.

Goes Back To Painting

YORK, Me. — (AP) — Mrs. Frank L. Garfield took up painting for fun, at the age of 70. She studied art as a girl. Then she married and was so active as a minister's wife and so busy with her family that it wasn't until retirement that she could paint again.

Now, nearing 90, she not only keeps house but creates, sells and gives away paintings. Her work is liked so well in this Maine community, center of a thriving summer resort area, that she has been commissioned to do a painting for the Community House of the First Parish Church.



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PLUS FREE GIFT

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Less Trade-in **45.00**

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