

# REALLY NEW LEGISLATURE

By George Kenney



Directors of the Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District are pictured from left, George Kenney, treasurer; Ken Turner, chairman; Dick McElligott; and Rudy Bergstrom, vice-chairman. Other directors include Ned Clark, secretary; Everett Struckmeier, and Jack Copenhagen.

The proper definition for conservation is "the wise utilization of a natural resource", not the hoarding or saving of it. Because the Soil and Water Conservation Districts make up a strong lobby in our state; we are in a position to conserve a third resource: The Independent American farmer. Instead of being wisely utilized, the young farmer has been locked away by economic circumstances until the average age of the American farmer is 55 years old.

Current proposed Oregon legislation which would ban corporate farming may have an affect on established farmers trying to stay in business but would do nothing to help the young farmer wanting to get into business.

The kind of legislation that could really help was introduced in the U.S. Senate about the first of November by Sen. George McGovern of South Dakota and co-sponsored by 11 other senators including Sen. Mark Hatfield.

This bill, called the "Young Farmer Homestead Act of 1975" would facilitate the following:

1. Create a Federal Farm Assistance Corporation to purchase farms at prices based on appraisals by the Farmers Home Administration.

2. FHA would lease the farm to the young farmer up to seven years for cash rent based on real estate taxes plus interest on the farm.

3. The young farmer would have the option of bailing out or buying the land with FHA or private financing. The purchase price would be the original cost plus 75 per cent of the appreciation. Presumably the 25 per cent increase in value would be due to the renters own work.

The best point the bill has is that if handled correctly, the program would cost the taxpayer nothing. The agency would recover its investment when sold to the young farmer plus 75 per cent of the capital appreciation.

There are problems with this bill of course. One, a low appraisal by the FHA (which is currently the case) would result in no land being bought. A high appraisal would be unfair competition for independent land buyers.

Something must be done to help young farmers get around a start-up cost, esti-

mated by some economists to be as high as \$250,000 and this bill just may be it. Surely the anti-corporation bill is putting the cart before the horse when the only alternative left to many farmer's sons is to go to work for the corporate farms. The Young Farmer Homestead Act is something positive.

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