

'Greedy farmers' statement attacked by Wheat League

Oregon wheat farmers told Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland today that the nation's farmers aren't greedy. "Greed is not the appropriate word to attach to hard-working farmers across the nation," Earl Pryor, Condon president of the Ore-

gon Wheat Growers League, said in a letter to Bergland. Pryor's statement came in response to a charge by Bergland that farmers demonstrating in Washington, D.C., are "motivated by greed." The demonstrators are members of the American Agri-

cultural Movement. "While we support the basic aims of the American Agricultural Movement, we certainly do not approve of the violence that has erupted in Washington," Pryor said. "Farmers across the United States have seen America's

economy grow while agriculture is at a standstill," Pryor said. "Statistics can be used to prove almost anything. While Secretary Bergland states that farm income has risen, I suspect he forgets costs have risen dramatically."

Oregon State University's 1978 wheat cost study shows a rise in production costs of 7.6 per cent, Pryor said. The study shows it cost \$4.40 to raise a bushel of wheat in Eastern Oregon in 1978. In 1977 the cost was \$4.09. Market prices for wheat in

Portland recently have been about \$3.67 per bushel. How can farmers stay in business? Pryor said the farmers lives on appreciation of land and depreciation of equipment. "On the short term you can stay in business so long as you

can pay out-of-pocket costs. But on the long term, you must pay for all the costs." He said that although wheat growers had good years in 1972 and 1973, and cattlemen finally are having a good year, the total balance "is not very bright."

Pryor said OSU reports current net farm income for 1977 in the United States was \$20.6 billion. But the true value in 1967 dollars is only \$9.2 billion, pointing out how inflation has affected the economy.

"Statistics can be made to show anything and I'm not sure I agree with the national average raise of 11 per cent for all farms that Secretary Bergland cites."

Pryor said OSU calculated net income for Oregon agriculture in 1977 at \$145.1 million, down from \$248 million in 1976.

Pryor said Oregon wheat farmers traditionally have looked to the market place to improve farm income.

"Oregon wheat farmers started foreign market development in the early 1950's. We worked to establish Western Wheat Associates to develop Asian markets and that has been a successful program. What we look for in government help concerns these export markets," Pryor said. "We don't think greed has anything to do with raising farm income. It is a matter of survival," Pryor said.

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Aliens must report U.S. farm holdings

Aliens who own or have a financial interest in more than one acre of U.S. farmland or who gross more than \$1,000 from any plot of U.S. land must now report their holdings to the federal government, according to regulations issued this week by Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland.

Under the regulations, aliens of foreign interests who owned farmland before Feb. 6 must report ownership by Aug. 6; those acquiring land after Feb. 6 must report the transfer within 90 days. Reports are made at the county office of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) in the county where the land is located. Failure to report could result in a fine of up to 25 per cent of the property's assessed value.

For purposes of this report, the department considers agricultural land as any tract of more than one acre now in agricultural, forestry or timber production. This generally excludes small plots, such as household gardens.

Financial interest in agricultural land means any portion of ownership in farmland, such as a partnership, trust, or shares in a corporation that owns farmland.

Reporting forms will soon be available in all of the approximately 2,700 ASCS county offices located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Real estate dealers, farm managers, banks, holding companies or other institutions can report in behalf of foreign clients. Individuals or institutions that specialize in land holdings, transfer of management, should contact their county ASCS office for details.

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Senior Citizen News

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program are being served vegetables just picked in a nearby greenhouse. Using a \$7,000 grant, a local anti-poverty group built the greenhouse and donated space in it to the elderly. It's also a demonstration of what solar energy can do, says Bill Powers of the Community Action Program. "Farmers around here think they can't afford to invest in solar equipment. We're showing them what \$7,000, the sun and 12 volunteers can really do." Wouldn't it be great to have affordable, fresh lettuce and tomatoes in January?