

Benson Sees Possibility of 90 Per Cent Price Supports on Top Products

Editor's note: The United Press submitted a series of questions to Secretary of Agriculture Ezra T. Benson on the farm problem which has become the center of a heated political debate. The following dispatch is based on his replies.

By BERNARD BRENNER
United Press Correspondent
Washington — (U.P.) — Secretary of Agriculture Ezra T. Benson said today there is a possibility the administration will restore 90 per cent price supports on "top quality products only."

Benson emphasized, in reply to a United Press questionnaire, that he is not abandoning the administration's flexible support program which has been under heavy fire from Democrats.

But he said "we are exploring a limited 90 per cent support plan especially as it concerns next year's wheat crop." He does not regard this as a "compromise" with high-support advocates.

"I think that we must recognize and will recognize differ-

entials for quality," he said. "Therefore, I think that there may be some possibilities for 90 per cent of parity supports on these top-quality products only."

The general idea of restoring 90 per cent supports on top-grade basic farm crops already has attracted backing from several leading farm belt senators, including Chairman Allen J. Ellender (D-La.) of the Senate Agriculture committee.

Possible Compromise
Ellender described the proposal as a possible compromise between Benson's flexible program and the rigid high price guarantees in effect under previous Democratic administrations.

Under the former program, originally drafted to spur wartime production of scarce foods and fibers, the government supported six basic crops at 90 per cent of the so-called "fair" parity price. Under present law, supports may range from 75 to 90 per cent.

The "basics" are wheat, corn, cotton, peanuts, rice and tobacco. Tobacco still is supported at 90 per cent under a special law.

An aide emphasized that Benson was not commenting directly on Ellender's proposal. He said the secretary merely was dealing with the general idea of a price support differential based on quality.

In his replies to the questionnaire, Benson stoutly defended flexible supports as an overall farm program.

"I do not believe we can get anywhere by raising prices above the levels where commodities will sell," he said. "... We must market what the public wants and at what price levels that will clear the market."

In a letter to farm organization leaders on Nov. 21, Ellender asked for consideration of "the feasibility of, say, rigid price supports to encourage production of desirable and salable basic commodities" and flexible

supports on poorer grades. Wheat, mentioned specifically by Benson as a crop on which the plan might be tried, was

Wall Street

New York — (U.P.) — Prices on the Stock Exchange moved irregularly today in moderately active dealings.

A handful of specialties, however, managed to tack on good gains. But in the main list price movements were very narrow.

Railroad shares as a group were mostly lower with losses running to a point or better.

Today's closing prices on selected stocks:

American T & T	179 3/4
Anaconda	70
Chrysler	82 1/2
Curtiss Wright	28 1/2
General Electric	54 1/8
General Motors	47
Montgomery Ward	96 1/4
Penney R	26
Penney J C	102 1/4
Radio	46 3/4
Southern Co	19 1/2
Southern Pacific	57 3/4
S Oil of Calif	81 3/4
Texas Gulf Sulphur	34 1/2
Transamerica	42 1/4
Tri-Continental	28 1/2
United Aircraft	69
U S Rubber	49 3/4
U S Steel	59 1/4
Youngstown	100

PORTLAND HAY, GRAIN

Portland—Wholesale Hay Prices: No. 2 green alfalfa, baled, f.o.b. trucks, Portland and Seattle, \$39-40 ton.
U. S. No. 1 Timothy hay, \$48 ton, f.o.b. Seattle; No. 1 Timothy mixed hay, \$41-42, Seattle.
Prices as reported by the USDA market news service: Wheat, No. 2 soft white, \$72.50 ton; No. 2 white oats, 36-lb. test, coast delivery, \$50; No. 2 Western barley, \$46.50 f.o.b. Portland, coast delivery; soybean meal \$77.50 ton, delivered Portland; standard millrun \$42-42.50; No. 2 yellow corn, Eastern shipments, f.o.b. Portland, \$63 ton.

PORTLAND LIVESTOCK

Portland—(U.P.)—Cattle 300, hold-over 250. Cutter steers and heifers \$10-12; medium stock heifers \$11; canner-cutter cows mostly \$6-7.50; shells down to 5; utility cows \$8-9-10-50; cutter-utility bulls \$10-12.
Calves 100. Good-low choice vealers \$12-20; some \$22; medium-good stock calves \$14-16, culls down to \$7.
Hogs 200, hold-over 185. U.S. 1 and 2 butchers \$10-23 lb. \$12-50-13; No. 3 lots \$12; sows \$9-10.50.
Sheep 500. Choice woolled lambs \$17.50; good-choice grade \$16-17; choice-prime No. 1 pelt lambs \$18; good-choice feeder lambs \$14-16; ewes \$2-5.

PORTLAND PRODUCE

Portland—(U.P.)—Eggs—To retailers: Grade AA large, 62-63c; A large, 59-60c; AA medium, 57-58c; A medium, 57-58c; small, 48-50c; carton 1-3c additional.
Butter—To retailers: AA grade prints, 66 lb. cartons, 67c; A prints, 66c; carton, 67c; B prints, 64c.
Cheese—To retailers: A grade cheddar, Oregon singles, 40 1/2-43 1/2c; 5-lb. loaves, 46 1/2-49 1/2c. Processed American cheese, 5-lb. loaf 39 1/2-41c lb.

Farm Market
Portland—(U.P.)—California cabbage sold mostly at \$6-6.25 a crate today; bunched turnips cost retailers \$30-4.75 for 2 1/2 dozen lots at some houses; top California tomatoes sold at \$4.25-4.75 for best two-layer lugs.
Poultry, Rabbits

Dressed Chickens—No. 1 dressed to retailers: Fryers, New York style, 34-35c lb.; whole drawn, 41-44c; cut up, 46-49c; hens, light type, New York style, 29-31c; cut-ups, 41-44c; hens, heavy type, N. style, 33-34c; whole drawn, 43-46c lb.
Turkeys—To producers for A grade young hens, f.o.b. farm, N. dressed, nominally 36c lb.; A grade toms, 29c; A grade hens, eviscerated, 41 1/2c; eviscerated toms, 31 1/2c lb.; fryer turkeys, live weights, 6 1/2-10 lbs., 34c lb.

Dressed Turkeys—To retailers: A grade young hens, 32-35c lb. eviscerated; A grade young toms, 45-52c lb. eviscerated, depending on weight; eviscerated fryer-roasters, 37c lb.

Rabbits—Average to growers f.o.b. killing plants—Live white, 3 1/2-4 1/2 lbs., 23-26c; 3-6 lbs., 18-21c; colored pels, 4c under; old does, 10-14c lb.; a few higher. Fresh killed fryers to retailers, 58-61c; cut up, 62-65c.

Dead line Sunday Classified is at noon Saturday; 10 a.m. Monday for Monday; other days 5:30 previous day.

selling at an average of 78 per cent of parity on Nov. 15, the date of the government's last official farm price survey. The support level is 82.5 per cent of parity.

On top grade, number one heavy northern spring wheat, has been selling at or above the support level since last August, however. Last year, when supports were 90 per cent of parity, this grade also sold on the open market at near or above support prices most of the season.

Benson has set the average support level for 1956 crop wheat at 76 per cent of parity, \$1.81 a bushel. Under current farm law, however, he has authority to raise support prices for higher grades while cutting the support for lower grades, thus leaving the overall average support level unchanged.

Four Rescued in Douglas County

Roseburg — (U.P.) — Four persons were rescued from a snow-bound mountain area near here in two separate incidents yesterday.

Two Roseburg truck drivers lost overnight while hauling micro-relay equipment to the top of 5000-foot King mountain south of here were brought to safety late yesterday afternoon. They were Wally Mentzger and Frank Guse.

Two Stayton, Ore., loggers were hospitalized at Roseburg yesterday suffering from frost-bitten feet and exposure after a 33-hour hike to safety from the snow-clogged Diamond lake area 50 miles west of here.

The loggers, William Stinnet, 22, and Frank Benson, 25, were marooned when their truck slipped off a snowbank into a ditch at 1 a.m. Sunday. They hiked until they found a California Oregon Power company cabin, Monday, where they were discovered by Pacific Telephone and Telegraph company crews some four miles from the microwave site at the mountain's summit.

Mentzger and Guse said they spent Monday night in a shelter after their truck became locked in a snowbank.

Market prices of wheat, cotton and other crops have been depressed by surpluses in government warehouses.

"I would like to add," Benson said, "that I think we need broader authority in this general field of moving our surpluses."

Exhibit Under Way
McMinnville—(U.P.)—The 14th annual Pacific Coast Turkey exhibit opened here today with a record number of entries in live and dressed divisions ready for judging.

Judges for the Northwest's biggest turkey show were M. M. Reiman of Planada, Calif., and Prof. E. Y. Smith of Cornell University, New York.

Field curing is a poor way to preserve alfalfa for dairy cattle feed, compared with silage, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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