



How Will Law Work?

WASHINGTON, D. C.—The way the new farm law “works” during 1950 will be a major factor in guiding the course of agricultural legislation during the second session of the 81st congress.

While much of the new act will not get a complete test until after 1950—such as the provisions applying a sliding scale of price supports and the new parity formula to the basic commodities of corn, wheat, cotton, rice and peanuts—there will be enough of the law in operation to serve as a weathervane.

The new parity formula and a new system of postwar price supports will be applicable to so-called nonbasic commodities which account for approximately three-quarters of the farmer's income—commodities such as dairy products, hogs, poultry and products, potatoes, wool, fruits, vegetables.

The thing to watch is the way the law “works” with regard to these commodities, some of which are under mandatory supports and some under a system of supports which will depend upon such factors as supply and need—but most of all, availability of funds.

Seventy-five to 90 percent supports for dairy products and 60 to 90 percent for potatoes and wool are written out in the new legislation, but wide discretionary power is given Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan with respect to the “nonmandatory” commodities such as hogs and poultry products.

Success of the program with respect to these commodities then, to a great extent, will depend on the way it is administered by USDA. The importance of the outcome cannot be overestimated when they bring in three-quarters of all farm income.

But the secretary also is bound by the availability of funds, and only congress can authorize government expenditures. So congress as well as the secretary will have a large share of responsibility for the way the law works.

With some fears being expressed that the basic commodities with their 90 percent mandatory supports, will leave little money for the non-basic with their variable supports and in many cases nonmandatory, there already are indications of efforts to get congress to increase funds available for supporting farm prices.

One way this could be done would be to increase the borrowing power of the Commodity Credit Corp. beyond the present statutory limitation of \$4,750,000,000. Several attempts were made at the first session to boost this limit, but none was successful.

A CCC report pointed out recently that the agency still had approximately \$2,000,000,000, but the bulk of investments in 1949 major crops still had to be made. CCC may have sufficient funds to get through the current fiscal year, but the fiscal year starting July 1, 1950, may be a different matter.

It all boils down to the fact that whether a serious effort is made or not made to pass still new “perma-

nent farm” legislation during the second session, congress still has a bull by the tail when it comes to farm legislation.

BRANNAN PLUGS HIS PLAN

Secretary Brannan made no bones of the fact that he still thinks congress should adopt his production payment plan to support perishable farm commodities.

He plugged for the plan in addressing the National Milk Producers federation annual meeting in November and again when he announced the 1950 support program for potatoes.

Dairy products, potatoes and hogs are among the commodities to which the secretary would like to apply the Brannan plan.

In announcing the new potato support program, Brannan came right out and said he wasn't satisfied with it, but it was the best he could do under the new farm law.

He indicated that he preferred higher supports in order to maintain producer income—providing, of course, that he had a new method for disposing of surpluses.

Brannan undoubtedly had in mind his farm plan which would permit prices of perishables to seek their natural level. If prices averaged below government supports, the government would make up the difference to the producer in the form of payments drawn on the treasury. Under his plan, the government would not buy surpluses as it now is required to do, but allow them to move into the markets at whatever prices they would bring.

If the secretary gets into trouble with the 1950 support program, he may attempt to use such troubles as a wedge to try once more to influence congress to give his plan a trial.

Brannan apparently considers the plan his ace in the hole.

OLEO TAX ISSUE

Number 1 item of business on the senate calendar for the new session of congress is repeal of the federal taxes on yellow-colored margarine.

This bill was passed overwhelmingly by the house of representatives in the first session, but butter state senators effectively bottled it up in the senate.

But oleomargarine manufacturers, encouraged by their victory in Ohio where voters approved sale of factory colored oleo, have their chips down expecting a quick victory in the second session.

Dairy state senators, however, threaten a filibuster which could tie up the second session of the 81st congress as the southern filibuster against civil rights legislation tied up the first session at the start of 1949.

RURAL ROADS ON DOCKET

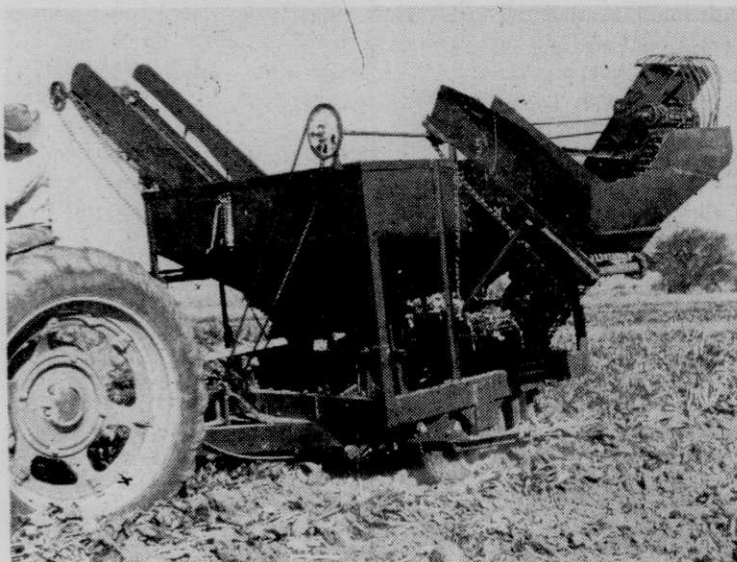
Rural roads legislation stands a good chance of approval in the new session of congress.

There are several bills pending, but their objective is virtually the same—\$100,000,000 to \$150,000,000 annually for improvement of rural roads with emphasis on routes used by R. F. D. school buses and farm-to-market.

Wyoming Farmer Invents Compact Beet Harvester

HERE'S A BEET HARVESTER that pulls, tops, loads and windrows the tops all in one operation. Farmer-inventor Fred Brug, Johnson county, Wyoming, says it will harvest 6 tons an hour and the tractor operator is the only man needed. Power is taken from the tractor power take-off.

The two-row unit has a conventional digger which lifts the beets into a twin auger mechanism that grabs the tops. The beet and all is carried back to the topping knives where the beet drops to a conveyor and the tops go right on out the back of the machine. A deflector plate puts both rows of tops into one windrow. Patents have been applied for and Brug hopes the machine may be manufactured soon.



—Montana Farmer-Stockman Photo

Right front view of the Brug beet harvester is seen above. The compact unit is only 6 feet long, 7½ feet wide. Chute-conveyor mechanism seen on right of machine takes the beets after topping and lifts them up to drop into the 2-ton capacity bin.

Right photo is rear view of the machine showing tops coming out and being put into windrow.



At left, a close-up view of the twin augers that pull the beet back for topping by rotary knives. Tops come off ends of the augers, drop onto the deflector plate seen in lower right of photo and drop into neat windrow.

Photo below shows conveyor mounted on left of machine, that runs from the very bottom and center of the bin to elevate the beets into a truck or into a stockpile. The beets actually travel on about 35 feet of conveyor before delivery into truck, making for clean, low-tare beets at the dump.

