



For Release: Thursday a.m.
November 17, 1955

NEWS RELEASE

from the Desk of SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

140 Senate Office Building, Washington 25, D.C., National 8-3120, Ext. 881
SENATOR HUMPHREY ACCUSES BENSON OF "PLOWING UNDER" NATION'S FARMERS

It will take more than new laws to rescue American agriculture, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) declared in an address last night at Hutchinson, Kansas. "It will take a new Administration", he said, "a Democratic President and a Democratic majority in the Congress!"

Terming the Republican farm program "a miserable failure," Senator Humphrey sharply accused Secretary of Agriculture Benson of "plowing under" the nation's farmers.

"We need men in government today who are more interested in a baby calf than they are in the Golden Calf on Wall Street," he said. "The Republican Agrabats are now in the saddle. The Department of Agriculture has become a privileged sanctuary for processors, speculators and financiers. Republican policies are driving the farmers off the land, just as they have long ago driven farmers out of the Department of Agriculture."

Senator Humphrey cited the fact that more than 170,000 farm families have been forced off the land since 1952. "Farm income," he went on, "has dropped almost 30% since 1952, while corporation profits -- after taxes -- have jumped over 31% in one year. Total farm mortgage indebtedness in August 1955 was up 10% over August of last year. And 1954 farm mortgages were up 7% over 1953. Farmers must pay increased interest rates on more and bigger mortgages than at any time since records have been kept."

"This is the farm situation -- not in a nutshell, but in an economic bombshell. The entire American economy is seriously threatened."

Senator Humphrey pointed out that every dollar of farm income multiplies itself seven times in the stream of commerce. "Every time farm income drops one dollar," he said, "the nation loses seven dollars of purchasing power. This loss of farm income can be an economic chain reaction -- a chain reaction as powerful as the atom bomb, as threatening to American safety and security as any nuclear weapon held in the hands of any foreign power."

"A new and effective and constructive farm program is the Number One need of the nation," Senator Humphrey said. "Instead of trying to achieve production balance by deliberately putting a price and income squeeze on farmers, it is time we give more thought to achieving better production balance by making it possible for farmers -- particularly on the family farms -- to make a decent living out of less acres and less production."

Calling for a program of conservation incentives for taking certain productive crop land out of production and putting it into soil-building programs, Senator Humphrey warned that at the same time Congress must restore the price support level to "at least 90% of parity."

"Ninety percent or better of parity for the farmer should be the goal of any farm program written by the Congress," he declared. "And this can be achieved through a variety of means -- crop loans with storage facilities, production payments for perishable commodities, direct purchase programs to remove temporary surpluses from the market, the expansion of our school lunch programs, a food stamp plan for our needy and underprivileged, and expanded and improved farm credit system, the use of the nation's food and fiber reserves as an active, constructive instrument of our foreign policy."

"This can be accomplished -- if there is a will to do it; if the spirit of administration is one that is dedicated to equality of opportunity for agriculture."



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