

From the Office of  
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HUMPHREY: FARM POLICY MUST CONSIDER SOCIAL OBJECTIVES AS WELL AS ECONOMICS

"Farm policies must be geared to desirable social objectives, as well as desirable economic objectives," Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) said today.

"Our family farm pattern of agriculture has been the basis of all our agricultural progress and of good rural community life," he said. "It builds among farm families attitudes of self-reliance, social responsibility, individual initiative, tolerance, and self-respect -- the attitudes that make for a sound and progressive democracy."

"The family farm builds strong families, and the family farm builds strong social communities, with good schools and active churches."

"I am against collectivization of our agriculture -- either by the Soviet pattern, or the corporate pattern of absentee-ownership," he declared. "I seriously challenge the current school of thought that 'bigness' may be the answer to the farm problem."

"The efficiency factor of mass corporate farming activities," he declared, "is essentially cheap labor -- just as it once was in the sweat shops of our early industrial cities."

"I cannot conceive of a permanent, peasant-class 'cheap-labor' force as the source of our nation's food supply, and the custodian of our productive resources. It would be a dangerous backward step in America's social progress, inviting the seeds of social unrest and revolt."

"Furthermore," Senator Humphrey said, "no one can convince me that we are really more efficient if we separate capital, managerial skills, and labor into three classes in agriculture -- instead of having them all combined in the family farm unit."

"None of us wants to perpetuate inefficiency or tie farmers to units too small to be economically practical. Yet there is a distinct line between improving the efficiency of family farmers, and abandoning the family operated farm concept in favor of large-scale industrialized farming operations under absentee-ownership and using hired labor."

Senator Humphrey emphasized the tremendous value of the family-farm system as a "symbol of hope to newly created nations."

"The dream and desire of free men everywhere is to own land," he said.

"Unrest in many parts of the world today results from insecure and inequitable farm land tenure, creating hopelessness among those who work the soil, and making

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them an easy prey for communism's glittering promises."

"The restless peasants of the world can find the ray of hope they seek in America's pattern of family farming and family farm ownership that enables the nation's farmers to farm efficiently, conserve soil and water resources, provide adequately for their family needs, and participate fully in civic, community and public interests."

"Can we risk destroying that ray of hope ourselves? Can we risk destroying the very symbol that proves democracy's superiority over communism?"

"Agriculture," he declared, "is the Achilles heel of Communism!"

"With all of its rockets into outer space, the Soviet Union cannot compare with American achievements in agriculture -- and it can offer no fulfillment to the dream of men and women elsewhere in the world longing for some land of their own."

"Throughout the world men are revolting against bigness, against corporate exploitation of land and worker, against absentee ownership, and insisting upon opportunity for individual independence and dignity. Yet here in America, we have achieved a system of independent land ownership, individual freedom, tremendous production of food and fiber -- the very goals which men and women all over the world are struggling to reach."

"How fatally short-sighted it is to persist in Government policies which strike at the very heart of the family farm system in America -- policies that if not reversed will surely result in the utter destruction of this rock of American freedom."

Senator Humphrey concluded by listing four major objectives of any sound and worthwhile farm program:

1. To assure the American people of a continued abundance of food and fiber.
2. To offer America's farmers an opportunity of achieving equality with other groups of our citizens.
3. To preserve and protect America's traditional pattern of family-owned, family-operated farms as the type of agriculture best adapted to the democratic way of life, and to encourage farm-cooperatives as a democratic extension of the free enterprise system.
4. To make greater use of America's undistributed abundance as a force for peace and freedom in a world crying for food and health.

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