

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

FOURTH ANNUAL CORNLAND SHOW

Olivia, Minnesota

August 21, 1976

It is a pleasure to be with you to participate in your fourth annual Cornland U.S.A. event. I also had the honor of being with you two years ago.

This is a splendid opportunity to pay tribute to the magnificent record of American agriculture and the special importance of corn.

American agriculture should be added to the list of world wonders.

On the average, each farm worker today feeds fifty-six people. In 1945 that figure was only fifteen -- an increase of 273 percent in just thirty years.

The importance of agriculture has received increasing attention in recent years. With total exports of over \$22 billion, its pretty hard to ignore.

And many of you, while appreciating this notice, have been less than happy with the stop and go non-policy and the embargoes of this Administration.

The selection of Senators Mondale and Dole as the Vice President nominees, at least in part, recognizes the growing importance of agriculture.

The world also has become more alert to agricultural production as markets nervously react to crop estimates in this country, the Soviet Union, Western Europe, India or China.

Limited rainfall during July resulted in reducing our corn estimates from around 6.5 to 6.2 billion bushels. Even this modest six percent reduction from the July 1 estimate carries important implications for our livestock producers, foreign buyers and the U.S. stocks.

Because of the drought in Europe, corn exports are now estimated at between 34 million tons or 1.35 billion bushels and 42 million tons, or 1.65 billion bushels.

This is an outstanding record, but it is a sixteen billion dollar story which did not just happen.

This exciting story goes back to the Pilgrims at Plymouth and the earlier settlers at Jamestown who had the good sense to grow and eat Indian corn in order to survive.

Corn soon became the food and feed bridge which the pioneers used to cross America from the Atlantic to the Great Plains.

Then, as now, no plant captured so much of the sun's energy with so little labor in so short a time. In 100 days, a kernel of corn could multiply itself five hundredfold.

The settlers ate corn in a dozen different ways and fed it to their oxen for work, cows for milk, chickens for eggs and hogs for meat.

The tales of lush prairies from Indiana to Nebraska helped trigger a march of land-hungry homesteaders, resulting in the marvel that we call the Corn Belt.

The corn that the Indians shared with the Pilgrims probably had a long, slender ear with only eight or ten rows of kernels which was later called New England Flint.

This New England Flint was quite different from the gourdseed corn from Mexico that had big, strong stalks with short, fat ears and soft kernels.

In 1812, John Lorain intentionally mixed gourdseed corn with a yellow flint and got a yellow variety that yielded 91 bushels an acre -- a third more than flint. Lorain predicted the possibility of getting 160 bushels an acre with his new corn, a wild prophecy at the time.

Later, scientists such as William Beal at Michigan Agricultural College and George Shull in New York crossed varieties, but they did not fully grasp the potential of hybrid varieties.

In 1918, at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Donald Jones invented the double-cross hybrid which yielded 100 to 120 bushels on soil where the best open-pollinated varieties made only 80 to 90 bushels.

Jones' discovery laid the groundwork for the hybrid seed corn industry and today's production story.

Hybrids caught on gradually, accounting for 51 percent of the acreage planted in 1934, 96 percent in 1961 and nearly 100 percent today.

But hybrids do not deserve all of the credit for increased production levels, since today's farmers have better fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and equipment.

In tests, present hybrids yield 30 percent to 50 percent more than the best open pollinated varieties.

But there are still new frontiers to cross and other breakthroughs to be achieved.

Some farmers, with irrigated farming, are today approaching 150 bushels per acre. And scientists have been doing research on high-lysine corn which puts the protein content nearly on a par with that of milk.

There undoubtedly are similar stories which could be told. The point to keep in mind is that the agricultural sector has assets of nearly \$600 billion.

We should continue to do all we can to encourage increased production to help feed a hungry world.

Today's population of four billion people will double in thirty-five years. And food deficits will reach over eighty-five million tons by 1985.

Next year, we will begin to draft new farm legislation which I hope will be a major improvement over today's statute.

We will need to assure our farmers better floor protection to cover their basic production costs.

Recent parity levels have been only around 74 percent, and this is just not adequate.

We passed a modest bill last year, raising target prices and loan levels, only to have it vetoed by President Ford.

We also will need to try again to raise our milk support levels. I have led the fight to raise the levels to 85 percent of parity and with a quarterly adjustment of the support levels.

We suffered three Ford vetoes in just over one year, but we did at last get the quarterly adjustment idea accepted.

Another area requiring attention will be the coordination and improvement of our emergency assistance programs. This year, we found out that the program often delivers little more than paper and promises.

I helped expand the transportation subsidy on hay by focusing attention on the impracticality of the Department's thirty day limitation on farmer hay supplies.

We will be trying to take other steps -- including passing my amendment to the tax bill to help livestock farmers forced to sell cattle prematurely.

But our producers deserve better permanent protection against the hazards of nature.

We also will be looking at agricultural research -- to find priority areas where added investments can bring significant returns. The story of corn can be repeated in other areas.

A new Administration also will need to give priority attention to developing a sensible export marketing policy. We should not discourage our producers and foreign buyers by taking the lid off and on export sales.

The rise of Brazil as a soybean exporter, growing out of the embargo on export sales to Japan in 1973, should remind everyone of the cost of not having a clearly understood policy.

In the Senate, we have recently passed an amendment to the tax bill which increase the level of inheritance taxes from \$60,000 to \$198,000. Now we will have to fight to keep this provision in conference committee. This is an important change which is vitally needed to retain the viability of our family farms.

Some years ago, many people looked down on agriculture. And it was assumed that farming was not profitable.

I am happy that the recognition is growing on agriculture's importance, and that farmers have every right to prosper.

I pledge to you my best efforts in helping agriculture to build and grow and tell its story of these splendid achievements.

In closing, permit me to quote a few lines of the eminent American poet, Carl Sandberg:

"When a society or civilization perishes
one condition may always be found.
They forgot where they came from.
They lost sight of what brought them along."

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OLIVIA, MINNESOTA

AUGUST 21, 1976

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR
FOURTH ANNUAL CORNLAND U.S.A. EVENT. I ALSO HAD THE HONOR
OF BEING WITH YOU TWO YEARS AGO.

THIS IS A SPLENDID OPPORTUNITY TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE
MAGNIFICENT RECORD OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE AND THE SPECIAL
IMPORTANCE OF CORN.

AMERICAN AGRICULTURE SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE LIST OF WORLD
WONDERS.

ON THE AVERAGE, EACH FARM WORKER TODAY FEEDS FIFTY-SIX
PEOPLE. IN 1945 THAT FIGURE WAS ONLY FIFTEEN -- AN INCREASE
OF 273 PERCENT IN JUST THIRTY YEARS.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE HAS RECEIVED INCREASING
ATTENTION IN RECENT YEARS. WITH TOTAL EXPORTS OF OVER \$22
BILLION, ITS PRETTY HARD TO IGNORE.

AND MANY OF YOU, WHILE APPRECIATING THIS NOTICE, HAVE BEEN LESS THAN HAPPY WITH THE STOP AND GO NON-POLICY AND THE EMBARGOES OF THIS ADMINISTRATION.

THE SELECTION OF SENATORS MONDALE AND DOLE AS THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES, AT LEAST IN PART, RECOGNIZES THE GROWING IMPORTANT OF AGRICULTURE.

THE WORLD ALSO HAS BECOME MORE ALERT TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AS MARKETS NERVOUSLY REACT TO CROP ESTIMATES IN THIS COUNTRY, THE SOVIET UNION, WESTERN EUROPE, INDIA OR CHINA.

LIMITED RAINFALL DURING JULY RESULTED IN REDUCING OUR CORN ESTIMATES FROM AROUND 6.5 TO 6.2 BILLION BUSHEL. EVEN THIS MODEST SIX PERCENT REDUCTION FROM THE JULY 1 ESTIMATE CARRIES IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS, FOREIGN BUYERS AND THE U.S. STOCKS.

BECAUSE OF THE DROUGHT IN EUROPE, CORN EXPORTS ARE NOW
ESTIMATED AT BETWEEN 34 MILLION TONS OR 1.35 BILLION BUSHELS
AND 42 MILLION TONS, OR 1.65 BILLION BUSHELS.

(THIS IS AN OUTSTANDING RECORD, BUT IT IS A SIXTEEN BILLION
DOLLAR STORY WHICH DID NOT JUST HAPPEN.

THIS EXCITING STORY GOES BACK TO THE PILGRIMS AT PLYMOUTH
AND THE EARLIER SETTLERS AT JAMESTOWN WHO HAD THE GOOD SENSE
TO GROW AND EAT INDIAN CORN IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.

CORN SOON BECAME THE FOOD AND FEED BRIDGE WHICH THE PIONEERS
USED TO CROSS AMERICA FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE GREAT PLAINS.

THEN, AS NOW, NO PLANT CAPTURED SO MUCH OF THE SUN'S ENERGY
WITH SO LITTLE LABOR IN SO SHORT A TIME. IN 100 DAYS, A KERNEL
OF CORN COULD MULTIPLY ITSELF FIVE HUNDREDFOLD.

THE SETTLERS ATE CORN IN A DOZEN DIFFERENT WAYS AND FED IT TO THEIR OXEN FOR WORK, COWS FOR MILK, CHICKENS FOR EGGS AND HOGS FOR MEAT.

THE TALES OF LUSH PRAIRIES FROM INDIANA TO NEBRASKA HELPED TRIGGER A MARCH OF LAND-HUNGRY HOMESTEADERS, RESULTING IN THE MARVEL THAT WE CALL THE CORN BELT.

THE CORN THAT THE INDIANS SHARED WITH THE PILGRIMS PROBABLY HAD A LONG, SLENDER EAR WITH ONLY EIGHT OR TEN ROWS OF KERNELS WHICH WAS LATER CALLED NEW ENGLAND FLINT.

THIS NEW ENGLAND FLINT WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE GOURDSEED CORN FROM MEXICO THAT HAD BIG, STRONG STALKS WITH SHORT, FAT EARS AND SOFT KERNELS.

IN 1812, JOHN LORAIN INTENTIONALLY MIXED GOURDSEED CORN WITH A YELLOW FLINT AND GOT A YELLOW VARIETY THAT YIELDED 91 BUSHEL AN ACRE -- A THIRD MORE THAN FLINT. LORAIN PREDICTED THE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING 160 BUSHEL AN ACRE WITH HIS NEW CORN, A WILD PROPHECY AT THE TIME.

LATER, SCIENTISTS SUCH AS WILLIAM BEAL AT MICHIGAN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AND GEORGE SHULL IN NEW YORK CROSSED VARIETIES, BUT THEY DID NOT FULLY GRASP THE POTENTIAL OF HYBRID VARIETIES.

IN 1918, AT THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION, DONALD JONES INVENTED THE DOUBLE-CROSS HYBRID WHICH YIELDED 100 TO 120 BUSHEL ON SOIL WHERE THE BEST OPEN-POLLINATED VARIETIES MADE ONLY 80 TO 90 BUSHEL.

JONES' DISCOVERY LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE HYBRID SEED
CORN INDUSTRY AND TODAY'S PRODUCTION STORY.

HYBRIDS CAUGHT ON GRADUALLY, ACCOUNTING FOR 51 PERCENT
OF THE ACREAGE PLANTED IN 1934, 96 PERCENT IN 1961 AND NEARLY
100 PERCENT TODAY.

BUT HYBRIDS DO NOT DESERVE ALL OF THE CREDIT FOR INCREASED
PRODUCTION LEVELS, SINCE TODAY'S FARMERS HAVE BETTER FERTILIZERS,
HERBICIDES, PESTICIDES AND EQUIPMENT.

IN TESTS, PRESENT HYBRIDS YIELD 30 PERCENT TO 50 PERCENT
MORE THAN THE BEST OPEN POLLINATED VARIETIES.

BUT THERE ARE STILL NEW FRONTIERS TO CROSS AND OTHER
BREAKTHROUGHTS TO BE ACHIEVED.

SOME FARMERS, WITH IRRIGATED FARMING, ARE TODAY APPROACHING
150 BUSHEL PER ACRE. AND SCIENTISTS HAVE BEEN DOING RESEARCH
ON HIGH-LYSINE CORN WHICH PUTS THE PROTEIN CONTENT NEARLY ON A PAR
WITH THAT OF MILK.

THERE UNDOUBTEDLY ARE SIMILAR STORIES WHICH COULD BE TOLD.

THE POINT TO KEEP IN MIND IS THAT THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR HAS ASSETS
OF NEARLY \$600 BILLION.

WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DO ALL WE CAN TO ENCOURAGE INCREASED
PRODUCTION TO HELP FEED A HUNGRY WORLD.

TODAY'S POPULATION OF FOUR BILLION PEOPLE WILL DOUBLE IN
THIRTY-FIVE YEARS. AND FOOD DEFICITS WILL REACH OVER EIGHTY-FIVE
MILLION TONS BY 1985.

NEXT YEAR, WE WILL BEGIN TO DRAFT NEW FARM LEGISLATION WHICH I
HOPE WILL BE A MAJOR IMPROVEMENT OVER TODAY'S STATUTE.

L WE WILL NEED TO ASSURE OUR FARMERS BETTER ^{Price} ~~FOR~~ PROTECTION TO
COVER THEIR BASIC PRODUCTION COSTS.

L RECENT PARITY LEVELS HAVE BEEN ONLY AROUND 74 PERCENT, AND THIS
IS JUST NOT ADEQUATE.

L WE PASSED A MODEST BILL LAST YEAR, RAISING TARGET PRICES AND
LOAN LEVELS, ONLY TO HAVE IT VETOED BY PRESIDENT FORD.

L WE ALSO WILL NEED TO TRY AGAIN TO RAISE OUR MILK SUPPORT LEVELS.
I HAVE LED THE FIGHT TO RAISE THE LEVELS TO 85 PERCENT OF PARITY
AND WITH A QUARTERLY ADJUSTMENT OF THE SUPPORT LEVELS.

WE SUFFERED THREE FORD VETOES IN JUST OVER ONE YEAR, BUT WE
DID AT LAST GET THE QUARTERLY ADJUSTMENT IDEA ACCEPTED.

ANOTHER AREA REQUIRING ATTENTION WILL BE THE COORDINATION AND
IMPROVEMENT OF OUR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. THIS YEAR, WE
FOUND OUT THAT THE PROGRAM OFTEN DELIVERS LITTLE MORE THAN PAPER
AND PROMISES.

I HELPED EXPAND THE TRANSPORTATION SUBSIDY ON HAY BY FOCUSING
ATTENTION ON THE IMPRACTICALITY OF THE DEPARTMENT'S THIRTY DAY
LIMITATION ON FARMER HAY SUPPLIES.

WE WILL BE TRYING TO TAKE OTHER STEPS -- INCLUDING PASSING MY
AMENDMENT TO THE TAX BILL TO HELP LIVESTOCK FARMERS FORCED TO SELL
CATTLE PREMATURLY.

BUT OUR PRODUCERS DESERVE BETTER PERMANENT PROTECTION AGAINST
THE HAZARDS OF NATURE.

L WE ALSO WILL BE LOOKING AT AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH -- TO FIND
PRIORITY AREAS WHERE ADDED INVESTMENTS CAN BRING SIGNIFICANT
RETURNS. L THE STORY OF CORN CAN BE REPEATED IN OTHER AREAS.

L A NEW ADMINISTRATION ALSO WILL NEED TO GIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION
TO DEVELOPING A SENSIBLE EXPORT MARKETING POLICY. WE SHOULD NOT
DISCOURAGE OUR PRODUCERS AND FOREIGN BUYERS BY TAKING THE LID OFF
AND ON EXPORT SALES.

THE RISE OF BRAZIL AS A SOYBEAN EXPORTER, GROWING OUT OF THE
EMBARGO ON EXPORT SALES TO JAPAN IN 1973, SHOULD REMIND EVERYONE
OF THE COST OF NOT HAVING A CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD POLICY.

L IN THE SENATE, WE HAVE RECENTLY PASSED AN AMENDMENT TO THE
TAX BILL WHICH INCREASE THE LEVEL OF INHERITANCE TAXES FROM
EXEMPTION

\$60,000 TO \$198,000.

NOW WE WILL HAVE TO FIGHT TO KEEP THIS PROVISION IN CONFERENCE
COMMITTEE. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT CHANGE WHICH IS VITALLY
NEEDED TO RETAIN THE VIABILITY OF OUR FAMILY FARMS.

SOME YEARS AGO, MANY PEOPLE LOOKED DOWN ON AGRICULTURE. AND
IT WAS ASSUMED THAT FARMING WAS NOT PROFITABLE.

I AM HAPPY THAT THE RECOGNITION IS GROWING ON AGRICULTURE'S
IMPORTANCE, AND THAT FARMERS HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO PROSPER.

I PLEDGE TO YOU MY BEST EFFORTS IN HELPING AGRICULTURE TO
BUILD AND GROW AND TELL ITS STORY OF THESE SPLENDID ACHIEVEMENTS.

IN CLOSING, PERMIT ME TO QUOTE A FEW LINES OF THE EMINENT
AMERICAN POET, CARL SANDBERG:

"WHEN A SOCIETY OR CIVILIZATION PERISHES

ONE CONDITION MAY ALWAYS BE FOUND.

THEY FORGOT WHERE THEY CAME FROM.

THEY LOST SIGHT OF WHAT BROUGHT THEM ALONG."



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