FARMER IS EFFICIENT

Mr. Prestbo points out that corporate farms, using labor-saving machinery and fertilizers, will produce crops in greater quantity and at lower prices than ever before. Does he think that the American farmer is still using horses to till the land?

The American farmer has been told by his government for many years that he must become mechanized and efficient. He has done this. Each farmer now produces enough food and fiber for himself and 37 others. He has been able to do this only with the use of sophisticated machinery and equipment, fertilizers, and technology. These, together with his willingness to expand the size of his operation, have brought to American agriculture an efficiency that is admired and envied throughout the world.

DROVE PRICES DOWN

In 1950 there were 8 million farms in the United States. Through administration of a government "cheap food policy," by 1960 only 5 million remained, and today there are only 3,176,000 left. In the early 1960's the farmer was told that we had a tremendous surplus of farm products. He was told that before farm prices could be allowed to increase, the surplus would have to be eliminated. By cooperating with the federal government in its farm programs, the surplus of the 1950's was eliminated.

Then in place of letting farm prices rise so that the American farmer could live on the same standard of living as the rest of our people, the government has used every power at its disposal to keep farm prices low. The government has intentionally dumped grain on the markets to lower prices, has allowed increased meat imports to force beef and pork prices down, and has advised consumers not to buy meat products. Also, to top all of this, the government increased 1967 acreages of feed grains and wheat sufficiently to cause another surplus so that prices could again be forced down.

Our government has been very successful. Corn, which two months ago cost the livestock feeder over $1.35 per bushel, is now bringing less than $1.10 on the farm. Soybeans, which were worth $3 per bushel at harvest time last October, are now worth only $2.50 per bushel. Wheat prices have gone the same route.

LOSE FAMILY LABOR

The American farmer has done everything in his power to try to raise his standard of living. He has increased the size of his operation. He has developed management ability. Farming has become a business enterprise but to no avail. The "cheap food policies" of our government are continually administering prices at a level where the farmer and the rancher are forced to live as second-class citizens. The family farm of today has the entire family working—the farmer, his wife and his children, all trying to make one living.

The corporate farms, which Mr. Prestbo advocates, will have to pay their management and their labor a living wage, and the labor's wife and children will not be available to work for nothing. This, in itself, will increase the cost of production. Today's farm machinery will only do a given amount of work before it is worn out. Machine cost per acre cannot be greatly reduced.

The broiler chicken industry is used in his article to prove that corporate farming is a good thing. It must be pointed out that there is no profit in the broiler industry, as such. These large corporations which grow the broiler chickens are only interested in the profits derived from the sale of their own feed. The same thing has happened in the turkey industry.

Mr. Prestbo also uses the commercial cattle feeding operations as an example. These operations have lost money during the past year as they must pay their labor and management a living wage. They cannot continue to lose money over a long period of time without going out of business, and they will never be able to compete with the "family labor" of the present American farm.

The food chains are circulating prices among themselves daily, which results in control of meat prices. Various cattlemen's associations in the West are now in the process of starting a civil suit against the chains for fixing prices. We have laws that were designed to prevent price fixing, but the Justice Department has not taken action for fear it would tend to raise food prices.