

I propose that:

We wake up and move against the big operators before it is too late.

We place our national land policy on the same level as our national price policy.

We recognize the threat in integrated farming.

We recognize the threat in the supersize family farm.

We stop worshiping everything that is big.

We give family farms the same break that corporate farms receive in access to capital—in the marketplace.

We alert the public to the danger of corporate farming.

President Johnson, Secretary Freeman, and the Congress have taken many steps to make certain that the position of the family farm remains secure.

But despite the efforts that have been made in Washington to bolster the family farm and thereby check the alternative system—corporation farming—I believe the country continues to move in an inexorable manner, away from the family farm.

I have the feeling, that in the years following World War II, we took a negative position about the family farm that became so firmly rooted in our thinking that recent efforts of the national leadership have been, to a great extent, nullified.

Allow me, for a moment, to inject a bit of personal history that supports the point that I am making.

During the 1950's I was out of this country a good deal of the time. I spent some 7 years in Iran. In Iran they are trying to build a family farm type of agriculture. There, the land is mainly in the hands of a few. They are trying to work their way to the American standard.

The experience I had in helping Iranians bring about improved land tenures renewed my faith in the family farm.

For there, as in every other underdeveloped country I visited, I found that when the land resources are in the hands of a few you find poverty and political unrest.

Placing the land in the hands of the people was obviously the way to raise incomes, bring about a stable government.

Then I returned to my own country to find the standard I had been nurtured on was still receiving some lip service but no real consideration.

Farming had become a business, pure and simple, the farmer a businessman, his operations had to be evaluated strictly in business terms.

Where in former days, farm professionals would hotly argue the best approaches to obtaining more resources for small farmers, establishing families on better land, getting better marketing co-ops started among farmers, now many seemed to be more concerned with the techniques of production on only the biggest farms, automated devices, input-output models, computers, that sort of thing.

Now, I am not criticizing the business-scientific approach to agriculture. It is necessary, of course, and proper. For agriculture is a business. To make a success of it, farmers must have enough resources and apply enough management skill to stay competitive. Agriculture is also a science, and farmers must continually take advantage of every scientific breakthrough.