

tolerable. The degree of concentration in the food business is already at the danger point.

If control of the primary food production is allowed to get into the control of the industry giants, both farmers and consumers could well be victimized.

The delegates to the Minnesota Farmers Union Convention in December, 1967, representing 25,000 farm families in Minnesota, unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"Corporate Super-Farms.—Non-farm investment and industrial firms have indicated their intent to operate huge corporate farms in Minnesota and other states. The production of the corporate super-farms is not needed and will only create new excess capacity in addition to the already excessive capacity on family type farms.

"Both legislative and regulatory measures should be taken to prevent further invasion of major industrial and non-farm corporations into agricultural production.

"Whatever administrative or legislative steps may be needed to distinguish family farms in each county from corporate super-farms should be taken. Once the family-type farms have been designated, the principal benefit of the farm programs should be reflected to them and denied to the corporate super-farms."

In line with this last recommendation in our Farmers Union policy statement, a comparable provision appears in our National Farmers Union policy for 1968, as follows:

"In the broad national interest, Congress is called upon to enact legislation to assure parity prices and income protection only on a family-farm level of production. In order to determine those farmers with a family type operation, the USDA should make a study directed to defining such farms on a county-by-county basis."

In addition to designating of farms as family farms as suggested above, the owners of farms should be required to register with the County ASCS committee for the purpose of disclosure of the principal owner or owners. Once a farm has been registered, it should be required that any change in ownership be reported within 30 days of such a change. Registration would require name and address of owner, size, and location of farm, date of acquisition, type of ownership, whether individual, partnership or corporation. In case of corporate ownerships, it should require disclosure of persons owning more than a 5% interest and should also disclose, whether the corporation has any business related to agriculture, either in farm supplies or marketing or processing. This would place on public record valuable information on farm ownership.

It is sometimes said that 100,000 farms could produce all the food and farm commodities which the nation needs. This may be theoretically true, because the same amount of land we have now would be combined into 100,000 farms, but it would also be completely undesirable.

Suppose for a moment, that our agricultural industry was made of 100,000 corporate superfarms. There are about 600 million acres of land in crops, pasture, and range-land. This would mean that the corporation farms would average 6,000 acres apiece. This would leave 4 farms per township—JUST FOUR. Only four farms where there are now in my state of Minnesota and in many parts of Wisconsin as many as 50 to 75 farm families per township. Suppose you are down to four farms per township—what kind of economic base does this leave for the community? What does this do to main street, to the banks, to the farm supply firms, the handlers of farm products and the farm co-operatives, who would be bypassed? What would happen to the community services and institutions, the schools, the churches, the REA systems, and the tax base.

This need not happen because action can still be taken to prevent this happening, but it will require the mobilization of all people who are a part of the rural community.

A final observation we wish to make is in regard to the absorbing of farm land by corporate investors—once the land is permitted to get into corporate hands, it is going to be difficult to reverse the process and restore family ownership. A corporation is a "legal person" which may have a 100-year life or a perpetual life. In family farming, there is some turnover in ownership—on the average there is change of ownership at least once in each generation, either from members of a family to a relative or from one private owner to another. But, since a corporation never dies, the land tends to remain in corporate hands, even though some of the stockholders may change from time to time.