

However, the important point is that about half of the acquisitions of land by non-farm investors have taken place in the last three years and that these purchases by 41 business corporations since 1965 total almost 100,000 acres.

This indicates that the trend is undoubtedly continuing. There is a time lag between the time a land transaction is made and the time it appears officially on the county records. Therefore, it is difficult sometimes to obtain immediate documentation of new acquisitions. It also appears that there is some effort by some buyers to conceal the ownership by having the purchase made for them by an agent who appears to be at the time a farmer buying land for his own personal use.

There appear also to be some instances in which land holdings which seem to be all in one basic ownership are held in several different names. The purpose undoubtedly would be to avoid violating state law which bars any corporation from owning more than 5,000 acres of farm land in the state.

It appears at this stage that there are a few corporations which have exceeded the 5,000-acre limit and are in apparent violation of the law. There are other corporations with more than 5,000 acres of land but a three-year statute of limitations has expired and they are not apparently subject to legal action. We also have a state law which requires life insurance companies who acquire farm land as a result of foreclosure of a mortgage or satisfaction of a debt to divest themselves of such property within 5 years.

While these two state laws contain only a part of what our Task Force will probably consider essential in an anti-corporation farm law, these laws should, nevertheless, be enforced.

We regard the existing state laws on ownerships of farm land by corporations and life insurance companies as the framework on which a more positive and effective state law can be considered and developed by the 1969 state legislature.

A draft of the suggested legislation will be prepared by the Task Force and made available for public discussion by legislators, farmers, and interested citizens of our rural communities before the 1969 session.

We are also exploring the merits of a new state real estate tax on excess farm land tax holdings and may recommend a legislative draft of a tax levied on a graduated basis in relation to the degree to which the land in question exceeds the average size of farms in a particular county.

We are also exploring the development of enabling legislation which would propose to empower county boards of commissioners to establish county boards on farm land resources, which might be given functions including the regulating of farm land transfers, regulation or prohibition of undesirable forms of agricultural enterprise not in character with the existing patterns in the county and which do not represent good land use; the regulation of public nuisances which result from air and water pollution arising from feedlots, egg factories, and confinement types of dairy or livestock operations; and the licensing and regulation of water use for irrigation farming.

Serious water shortages have already arisen in some parts of the country due to the depletion of ground water supplies by excessive pumping for irrigation purposes. Problems are also reported in air and water pollution due to poultry and livestock operations which have tremendous numbers of birds or animals concentrated in a limited area.

Scientists calculate that a 10,000-head beef feedlot creates as much waste matter as a city of 160,000 persons, for example the combined population of Duluth and Superior, yet there are often no adequate provisions for waste disposal at the feedlots.

We are convinced that considering the problems elsewhere, Minnesota ought to be preparing itself with some reasonable regulations administered at the county level. Undoubtedly, these problems of water-use regulation and air and water pollution may not be long delayed in appearing in this state.

We have not finalized these recommendations but expect to do so in the coming weeks. If it is agreeable with the Chairman, we would be happy to submit them when they become available.

Another activity in which we are engaged is a study of farm land transfers and prices. Studies by the Department of Agriculture and the University of Minnesota show some of these trends as of the year 1967. Farm land values have increased about 7% in the year of 1967.

To augment this data, we have solicited the co-operation of rural real estate agencies and dealers in farm land. We have obtained replies from more than 100