

U.S. farmers learning political 'ropes'

United Press International

Farmers who once called legislative offices to lodge mild complaints, almost apologetically, are turning into politically saavy amateur lobbyists who realize farm work in the 1980s demands personal political participation.

Both legislative aides and members of well-established farm groups say there is a new political aggressiveness among Midwestern farmers — a movement that goes beyond the voting booth and tractor trips to Washington.

"They used to be very apprehensive, and almost apologetic," said Al Tank, agriculture specialist for Rep. Jim Leach, R-Iowa. "Now they realize the rules of the game. They're not exactly demanding,

but more confident and use a lot more personal contact."

Perhaps the best example of the emerging farm activist is the Drought '83 Committee of southeastern Iowa, which focused national media and government attention on the subject that gave it its name.

Committee spokesman Jerry Kincart started out seeking press coverage from a makeshift headquarters in a downtown real estate office. Now he regularly makes and receives phone calls from congressmen about national farm policy.

"The change came when I realized the old cliché, 'These guys put their pants on one leg at a time just like the rest of us,'" he said. "I used to feel kind of intimidated by these guys."

Government response follows media response, Kincart

said. And the media response came when these smaller, special interest groups learned to talk in terms the press understood.

"We have to stop talking like a bunch of farmers and talk in terms everybody can understand," said Wayne Cryts, who was catapulted into the national media after a confrontation with federal officials over a bankrupt grain elevator.

"Instead of talking about interest rates and debt consolidation, we need to show how equipment prices have tripled and grain prices have dropped."

Cryts, who led a band of farmers past FBI agents to retrieve his soybeans from a bankrupt elevator, has pledged to raise \$1 million this year for American Farmers Survival, another special interest farm group formed to save family farms in the face

of last year's drought and declining land values.

"What we're saying is that political participation is as much of farming as planting and harvesting," Cryts said.

Established farm organizations like the American Farm Bureau agree wholeheartedly with that view. But Midwestern spokesmen for the Farm Bureau note history has not been kind to "ad hoc" or single-issue farm groups.

"In only a few instances have single-issue, ad hoc groups lasted long enough to cause real change," said Iowa Farm Bureau spokesman Gene Maahs. "In general, they can create a lot of media attention that is helpful in pointing out a pattern of localized problems."

"The Wayne Cryts' of the world have to understand you

don't get influence by getting your name on TV," Illinois Farm Bureau spokesman Dennis Vercler said.

"To their credit this group (Drought '83) and others called national attention to a dramatic problem. But single issue ad hoc groups in general tend to oversimplify situations. Non-agricultural people think all the farmers are in the same boat and that doesn't serve the farmers too well."

Cryts said a lesson he learned is to play by the rules of the game. He said those rules revolve around high-pressure, high-paid political action committees that wield campaign funds and votes.

"PACs will open more doors than 100 tractors running around Washington," Cryts said.

'Casino' to open in Houston under legal gambling laws

United Press International

HOUSTON — Houstonians who like to gamble will soon have their own "casino" to play in, and the operators say it's all within the limits of Texas law.

The casino, to be called "Casino," is scheduled to open Feb. 21 and will include all the Las Vegas trappings, complete with scantily clad women, a Las Vegas show and, of course, blackjack, craps and some other gaming tables.

The operators intend to comply with Texas gambling laws, including limitations on gambling paraphernalia, said general manager Ken Detwilder.

The essential difference between this casino and those in Las Vegas — and the reason it's basically legal — is it doesn't pay off, Detwilder said.

"What you do is you come in and pay 50 bucks and you get 10,000 "dollars" worth of chips and you get to play until your 10,000 is gone," said Detwilder, a veteran Houston restaurant manager.

"To gamble you've got to have a monetary reward. Here, you don't win anything. You can win chips back, but you can't cash them in. To gamble, you have to have a monetary reward. Here, you can't win anything."

"You use up your 10,000, you move on. Or you pay \$50 and get 10,000 more."

Detwilder said the slot machines — which under an odd Texas law must be pre-1941 vintage, be registered with the sheriff and not pay rewards to gamblers — will cost a quarter a play and will pay only to charity.

"Another part of the building

will be a real live bingo parlor that gives away \$5,000 in prizes a day. We're organizing five different charities and they'll receive the proceeds from the bingo," Detwilder said.

"The only proceeds the casino will receive from the bingo (which Detwilder said is legal) will be food, beverage and parking."

The entire project, said attorney Murray Lieberman, is a legal part of a divorce settlement. Lieberman represents Norman Wells, developer of Norwell Weight Reduction Centers, who is divorcing his wife, Dorothy.

After 22 years of marriage and five children, she demanded that he set her up in business.

Wells agreed and they — in consultation with their lawyers — decided on the casino, which they believe is an innovation.

Wheat pastures recovering

United Press International

Milder temperatures over Texas at mid-week helped boost recovery of wheat pastures that were severely damaged by December's record-shattering temperatures, and aired out wet pasture roads that have hindered ranchers in their livestock feeding operations.

Although wheat fields are beginning to show some signs of recovery, most Texas farmers

and ranchers are upping their earlier estimates of winter-kill for their oat crops. In many areas, indications are that virtually all of the crop will be lost, said the Texas Agricultural Extension Service here.

Livestock owners also are continuing their heavy feeding schedules of protein and hay for their animals, but many cattle continue to suffer weight loss despite the accelerated feeding schedules.

Hay supplies are being de-

pleted in many areas, and cattlemen are attempting to locate new sources of hay. Marketing of cattle is reported to be "above average" in many areas despite lower prices as ranchers attempt to "hold the line" on soaring feed bills.

The long periods of sub-freezing temperatures also are resulting in respiratory and other animal health problems in many parts of the state. Death losses continue in stocker cattle and newborn calves.

Freeze damages to ornamentals and the rose industry in Smith County have been estimated by growers at approximately \$10 million. Freeze damage assessments for other crops are continuing across the state.

A benefit of the record cold may be a reduction in some insect pests this year, the Extension Service said. Cold temperatures have destroyed many insects that overwinter in trash and plant debris, but is not expected to affect insects that burrow into the soil.

Rio Grande Valley growers are harvesting little processing fruit since the quality has deteriorated recently, and no fresh fruit is being shipped. The sugarcane harvest is continuing there, along with slow harvests of broccoli, cabbage and carrots.

Onion replanting because of freeze damage has been completed in the Winter Garden area of Southwest Texas, and farmers are hand-harvesting carrots to take advantage of improved prices.

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What's up

THURSDAY

BUSINESS STUDENTS: Clayton W. Williams, Jr. will be speaking at 8:30 p.m. in room 114 Blocker. All students are encouraged to come.

CHI ALPHA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP: A meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. in room 510 Rudder Tower. Contact Paul Giles at 846-2777.

CO-OP STUDENT ASSOCIATION: A meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. in room 402 Rudder Tower. Elections will be held at that time. Contact Tom Thurmond at 764-0083 for more information.

DANCE ARTS SOCIETY: A meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. in room 268 East Kyle (dance room). The dance class and the spring show will be discussed.

GERMAN CLUB: The first meeting of the semester will be held at 7:00 p.m. in room 504 Rudder Tower. Everyone welcome! Contact Beatrice Souroujon at 693-6792 for more information.

LUTHERAN STUDENT MOVEMENT: All those who want to go to the Hall of Fame should meet at the Chapel at 7:30 p.m. Contact Cindy Beck at 779-3260 or Darrell Anderson at 260-4788 for more information.

MSC CEPHEID VARIABLE: "A Boy and His Dog" will be shown at 7:30 and 10:00 p.m. in Rudder Theatre. Tickets are \$1.50.

MSC HOSPITALITY: January 27 is the deadline to turn in applications. Interviews will be held from Jan. 30 to Feb. 1. Also, a reminder that the 5th Annual Miss Texas A&M Pageant is Feb. 25. Tickets are available at the MSC Box Office. Student tickets are \$3.50 and non-student tickets are \$6.00. For more information, contact Lorraine Christian at 260-3109 or the MSC Box Office at 845-1234.

MSC INSIGHT STUDENT/FACULTY DISCUSSION SERIES: An organizational meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. in room 216T of the MSC. Everyone is invited.

METAPHYSICAL SOCIETY: A general meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in room 140A of the MSC. Possible speakers and lectures for the semester will be discussed. Contact Claudia Goebel at 764-0992 for more information.

MEXICAN-AMERICAN PRE-HEALTH AGGIES: A presentation will be given by Amigos de las Americas at 7:00 p.m. in room 502 Rudder Tower. The topic is summer public health projects in Latin America and the focus is on the Maverick Training Program.

TAMU BICYCLE CLUB: A meeting will be held in room 704 Rudder Tower at 7:00 p.m. Ride calendar, century and the spring break tour will be the main topics of discussion. All are welcome! For more information, contact Jim at 696-2669.

TAMU COLLEGE REPUBLICANS: The first spring meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. in room 601 Rudder Tower. Former Bryan Mayor Richard Smith is the guest speaker. Call Douglas Jones at 696-9763 for more information.

MSC ENDOWED LECTURE SERIES: The membership drive will continue through Friday. Applications are available in room 216 of the MSC. Contact Keri Elist Hairston at 693-5342 for more information.

TAMU FENCING: The first meeting of the semester will be held at 7:00 p.m. in room 264 East Kyle. The equipment order has come in and will be distributed. For more information, call Mike at 260-1339.

TAMU ICE HOCKEY TEAM: A meeting to discuss this weekend's game will be held at 8:00 p.m. in 204C of the library. Call Steve Mathiason at 260-6297 for more information.

TAMU MICROCOMPUTER CLUB: The hardware committee will hold its organizational meeting at 7:30 p.m. in room 105C Zachry. The plans for building a computer will be discussed. Contact Tom Rokicki at 260-6266 for more information.

TAMU ROADRUNNERS: A meeting will be held in room 604A&B Rudder Tower at 7:00 p.m. This semester's activities will be discussed. For more information, call Mark Eddy at 696-3683.

TAMU TENNIS CLUB: Membership and tournament sign-ups will continue through Friday in the MSC. Call Hank Kleespies at 764-8135 for more information.

TAMU WOMEN'S CHORUS: Orders are being taken through Friday for submarine sandwiches. The sandwiches will be delivered Feb. 4. For more information, contact Carol Ann Hartzog at 845-5974 or 260-0654.

Reagan

(continued from page 1)

Just nine days after setting a new, more temperate tone in what had been a harsh war of words between Washington and Moscow, Reagan directed a message to the Soviet people intended to underscore a willingness for improved relations.

"People of the Soviet Union," he said, "there is only one sane

policy for your country — to mine to preserve our civilization in this modern age: a nuclear war cannot be won and never be fought."

The overall theme of the speech — "a nation revived" — the one Reagan is expected to use on the campaign trail during the coming months in his quest to become the first two-term president since Dwight Eisenhower.

"There is renewed energy and optimism throughout the land," the 72-year-old president declared. "America is back — standing tall, looking to the future with courage, confidence and hope."

Reagan repeated his conviction that when he took office in 1981, "We faced the worst crisis in our post-war history" — the result of excessive and intrusive government, economic despair and weakness in international affairs.

But he did not direct blame to Democrats or Congress, as he often has in the past, and said "honest and open differences did not 'keep us from joining hands in bipartisan cooperation to stop a long decline that had drained this nation's spirit and eroded its wealth.'"

The space station was the most ambitious initiative contained in a speech devoted largely to what the administration has accomplished the far and what a second Reagan term might hold.

The space project, estimated to cost \$8 billion in all, will cost \$150 million in the new budget

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