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Cuts in aid will affect mid-size farms the most

By DEENA ELLIOTT
Reporter

The Reagan administration's proposal to cut farmers' aid 50 percent to help decrease the federal deficit would help the agriculture industry in the long run to be "more competitive in world markets and more efficient, but it would also be a higher risk," says Dr. Ronald Knutson, a professor in agricultural policy at Texas A&M.

Knutson said the current farm bill will spend \$10 billion in aid in 1985. The increase in the amount of deficiency payments, he said, has resulted in an increasing reliance of farmers on the government. The net farm income, or profit, has been \$20 billion, with \$10 billion being government money, he said.

The federal budget cut, if approved, is not just a matter of decreasing the federal deficit, Knutson said. It is a matter of reversing the trend that has caused farm incomes to become more distant from the market and more reliant on the government.

In order to compete in the export market in the early 1970's, the government lowered floor prices and provided direct payments in the form of deficiency payments based on set target prices, Knutson said. The government spent \$3 billion to \$5 billion in farm programs in the 1970's, he said.

The impact on farmers and ranchers in the short run would probably be a substantial decline in income, Knutson said. Some increase in market prices is also a possibility, he said. Livestock programs could even be favorably affected with the grain prices becoming more market sensitive.

A decline in the number of farms

is another probability. The middle-sized farm will be hurt more than either large or small operations, Knutson said. Many small farms have more off-farm income than on-farm income, he said, and large farms are usually more efficiently run.

Also, Knutson said some farmers would probably be going out of business — the price for switching to a market-oriented program after having a government protection program.

"Those farmers who are less efficient and more in debt will be most affected," he said.

People considering agriculture as a profession would probably find it less attractive in the short run, Knutson said.

But in the longer run, "the market will offer more opportunities and make agriculture more attractive for good management," he said.

The best method of survival for the farmer if the cut is approved would be to do a better job of marketing and managing the farm operation, Knutson said.

He said he expects a cut, but the final budget cut would probably be a compromise — not as big as the administration would like to see. Any cut in farmers' aid will probably be put into effect over a three-year period.

Dr. Knutson has been involved in agricultural politics in Washington, D.C., as a member of the transition team in 1980 when President Reagan first took office and in the early 1970's under Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz.

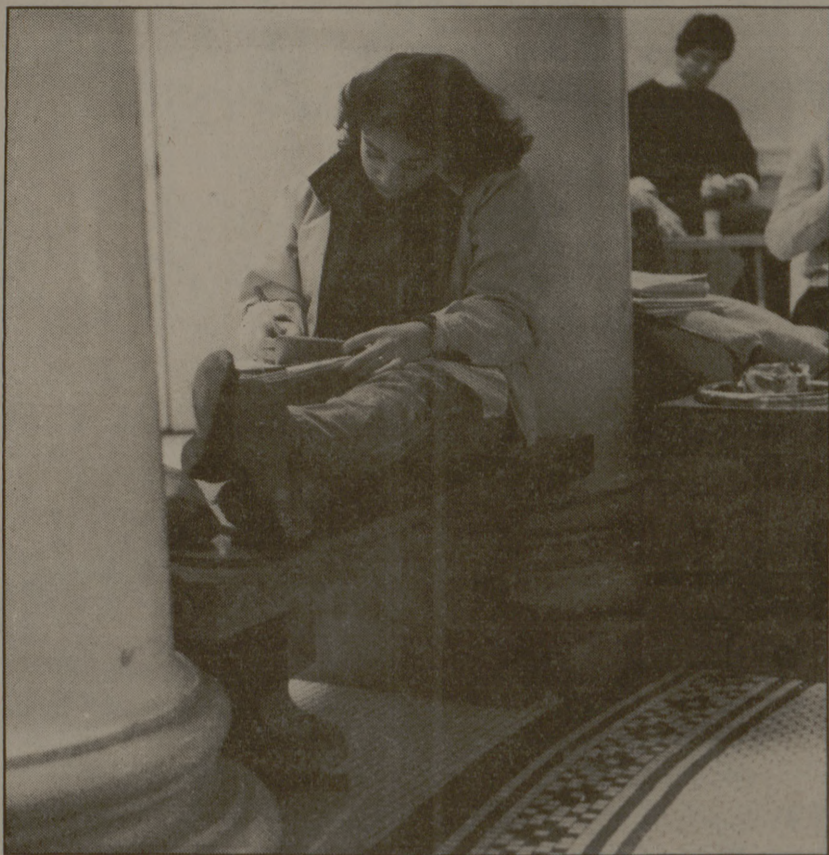


Photo by JULIA COKER

Think, think, think

Students can be seen studying and cramming for exams all over campus this week. Shellie Prewitt found her quiet niche to study in the Academic Building. Exams continue through Friday morning.

Police Beat

The following incidents were reported to the University Police Department through Tuesday.

- MISDEMEANOR THEFT:**
- Thirty-five dollars in cash and two personal checks totaling \$31.56 were stolen from 629-F Blocker.
- ASSAULT:**
- A custodial employee reported that a man assaulted her on the third floor of the Academic Building.
- CRIMINAL MISCHIEF:**
- The window was broken on one

of the clothes dryers in the Corps of Cadets laundry room.

- BURGLARY OF A BUILDING:**
- Component parts were stolen from an Apple II computer in the Learning Resources Center on the third floor of Sterling C. Evans Library.
- HARASSMENT:**
- A student reported someone left several notes on the Memorial Student Center bulletin boards suggesting people call her for "special services."

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THE ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI

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PAUL McCARTNEY'S GIVE MY REGARDS TO BRONX STREET

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SALLY FIELD

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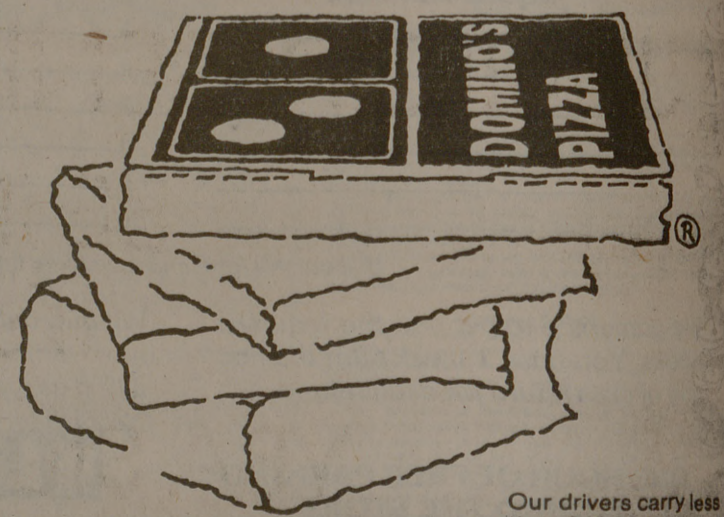
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