

# Farmers knock ag policies

by Chris Harper

"A forgotten minority—farmers." That's how one rural resident—a George McGovern supporter—described his disgust with President Nixon's agricultural policies.

But two others interviewed last week, while not happy with the President's agricultural programs, said they plan to vote for him anyway.

"Small family farmers are the heart of the rural economy in Nebraska," says John Hansen, 21, of Newman Grove. "The problem of young people leaving Nebraska or not returning to their former country residences is because the rural economy is suffering. President Nixon and Earl Butz (secretary of agriculture) are the main reasons why the rural economy is suffering."

Hansen, who operates a 300-acre farm with his father, said he plans to vote for McGovern.

"McGovern has been and remains one of the most ardent supporters of the small family farm concept," he said.

"In the last 10 years, the average farm debt has increased substantially yet agri-businessmen have achieved larger profits at the expense of the small family farmer," Hansen charged. "Nixon is, has and always will be, the choreboy of the large financial interests and for corporations rather than people."

But at Stoner's General Store in Unadilla, Floyd Isaacs, 66, said he plans to vote for Nixon.

"I bet \$5 on McGovern, but I guess I'll vote for Nixon. Before I could get some good odds

on McGovern, this guy called me on my bet," Isaacs said as he reclined in the store's rocking chair.

"Nixon's done as good a job and will continue to do as good a job as possible under the circumstances," Isaacs added. "He's done a good job of getting the boys back from Vietnam."

The long-time Unadilla farmer, however, also criticized Nixon's agricultural policies.

"The secretary of agriculture could have raised the parity support on grains, but they only went ahead and raised their own wages," he said. "I think it's a mistake to have a big businessman as secretary. Butz is hooked into Ralston-Purina."

Regarding McGovern, Isaacs said he isn't certain that the South Dakota senator would be a good President.

"He's making some wild promises. I don't think he can bring home the boys and the POWs so quickly," Isaacs said. "One thing about McGovern—he's a farmer and he knows what it's like to milk cows and pitch hay. I think it might help if a man like that were in the White House."

A solid Republican voter since 1932, Isaacs tugged on his grey cap and said: "I guess there are still a few things I want to iron out in my own mind before I go scratching the ballot."

Another Unadilla resident, Fred Riege, 65, also said he plans to vote for Nixon.

"Nixon has done about an average job," Riege said. "I can't see that he's made many changes or made much progress, but what would be the advantage of changing? We'd just go backwards."

Riege said, however, that he and the federal government have never "seen eye to eye" on the nation's agricultural programs.

"In the '30s we voted on whether to continue Roosevelt's farm program. They used two different colored ballots—one for farmers on the program and one for farmers not on the program," Riege said. "They didn't even listen to the ones who voted against the program. I've voted Republican ever since."

"Subsidies are why we see all these empty farms," he added. "Pretty soon we won't see many small farmers. They're gobbling up a lot of the farms. It's hard for a person to even get started in farming nowadays. We should have discontinued the subsidy program long ago."

Riege voiced harsh criticism for McGovern. "If he was truly interested in farming he would have stayed a farmer," he said. "He must have been more of a politician. I don't think he'd be of much benefit as President."



photo by Chris Harper

Unadilla farmer Fred Riege . . . "If McGovern was truly interested in farming, he would have stayed a farmer."



## daily nebraskan

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