



Ford pledges support for nation's farmers

By Randy Gordon

President Gerald R. Ford Wednesday afternoon committed the executive branch of the federal government to aid farmers who are pledged to full food production by providing adequate fuel and fertilizer, opposing export controls on farm products and protecting U. S. dairy farmers from imports.

Ford reasserted his opposition to raising the federal gas tax, saying "I didn't ask for it, I am opposed to it, and I know the Congress won't pass one."

Ford said he is against export controls for U. S. farm products and does not intend to impose them.

"At the same time, because I feel I have an obligation to protect adequate food reserves we are going to monitor those sales.

"We will permit the sales of reasonable amounts over a reasonable period of time, as they are important to our balance of payments," he said.

Ford, in an accompanying statement issued by White House Press Secretary Ron Nessen's office, ruled out a blanket embargo on grain exports. He said the federal government's Economic Policy Board will continue to monitor grain exports to "insure that our domestic demand is not left without a supply."

Ford was recently reported to be upset by large grain sales to the Soviet Union (3.4 million tons) and Iran (for 448,000 tons). He cancelled both orders after learning of them.

In pledging to protect U. S. dairy farmers, Ford said "We are not going to let subsidized foreign dairy imports destroy the American dairy farmer's domestic market."

Ford, in Lincoln to support the candidacies of Republicans for state and federal office, said farmers "are real inflation fighters who have and can contribute" to solving the nation's economic problems.

"We should give them the fuel and fertilizer to do the job, even if we have to allocate it arbitrarily," Ford said.

He said the federal government is attempting to cut back the amount of fuel oil imported to one million barrels daily, compared to over three million barrels a day now being imported.

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Above: Gesturing expansively, President Ford greets an audience of about 5,000 people after flying in on Air Force One p.m. for a 25-minute West. Ford arrived at 3:05 a.m. for a 25-minute speech. While campaigning for incumbent First District Congressman Charles Thone, he also plugged Republican gubernatorial candidate Richard Marvel and Anne Batchelder, candidate for lieutenant governor.

Photos by Ted Kirk and Steve Boerner

Left: Surrounded by Secret Service agents, President Ford shakes hands with Bill Barrett, chairman of the Republican State Committee.

Ford greeted by cheers, jeers, NU fight song

By Deb Gray

"This looks like a big party," DeLana Cromer said, looking over a panorama of balloons, bands and campaign banners.

But Cromer wasn't here for the party. Unlike the majority of the more than 5,000 people who streamed into Lincoln Air Park West Wednesday afternoon to see the President of the United States, Cromer was here to protest "inactive government in an unresponsive society."

About 100 people standing within a roped area waved signs protesting apathetic government, President Gerald Ford's pardon of former President Nixon, amnesty for draft resisters and for Wounded Knee defendants and cutbacks in military spending.

One demonstrator, John Knappe, 15, said he came to the Air Park to protest military spending. The Secret Service refused to allow protestors within the spectator area, he said.

"I think they're afraid we might kill him," said one man, who had been barking instructions to a paper mache facsimile of Ford.

Ford's visit "wonderful"

Other people came to the rally because, right or wrong, Gerald Ford is the President. And the president is an institution they don't see in person very often.

Robin Shipman, 9, said "I had never seen a president before in my entire life." A President was worth seeing because "he can tell people what to do," she said.

Sporting a homemade Whip Inflation Now (WIN) button, Martha Avre said Ford's visit to Lincoln was "wonderful." She had never seen a President in her 70-odd years, she said.

The East High School band then struck up one-of-many renditions of "There is No Place like Nebraska," and Avre's companion, Essie Cook, sang along.

"This thing is like a Nebraska pep rally," commented another spectator. "All we need is Bob Devaney."

A few minutes later, Devaney arrived with Paul Douglas, Republican candidate for attorney general. Devaney said he would have written a letter instead of appearing personally, but "I couldn't find any school stationery and my secretary didn't have any time."

(Devaney has been criticized by some for writing letters supporting Douglas' candidacy using University stationery.)

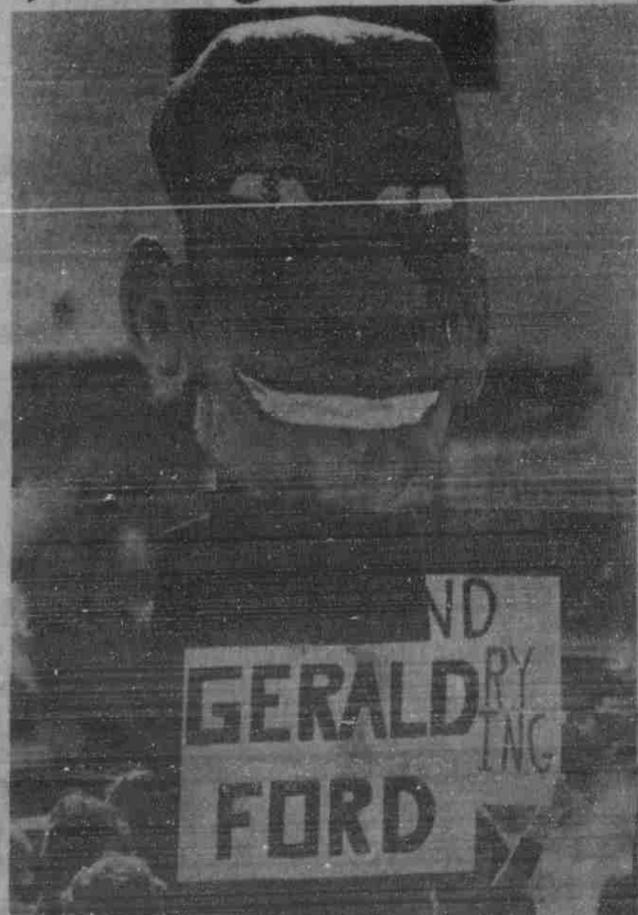
Protestors chanted

When Ford arrived, the demonstrators broke police barriers and entered the crowd, threatening to crash the party.

Their "Vietnam, Wounded Knee: Nixon needs no amnesty" chant continued through most of Ford's 25-minute address, except when Ford referred to Nebraska's "two great senators, Roman Hruska and Carl Curtis." A prolonged howl followed.

At times, the chanting became so loud that one observer said, "we couldn't hear the President for all the ruckus going on."

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Demonstrator greets head of state.