

Farm subsidies needed

By Terie Clement
Staff Reporter

Federal farm subsidies are necessary to keep many farmers in business, a University of Nebraska agriculture official said.

Leo Lucas, dean and director of NU's Cooperative Extension Service, said because grain profits are down, other countries subsidize their farmers and South America produces cheaper grain, the United States must subsidize its farmers to keep them in business and compete in the world market.

European farmers are subsidized 50 to 75 percent more than American farmers, Lucas said. And in Brazil, where labor is cheap, farmers can sell grain at more competitive prices than here, he said.

An excess supply of grain makes it difficult for farmers to get a good price on the world market, Lucas said.

Grain is not the only product the United States government subsidizes. Farmers who produce cheese and honey also are eligible for government assistance.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, determines who will get the subsidies

and distributes them.

Subsidies are not simply loans to farmers. Most are programs designed to benefit both the farmer and the U.S. agriculture market.

Some examples of these programs are:

● **Payment-in-kind.**

The government asks farmers to take a certain percentage of their land out of production. This land is also known as set-aside acres.

Farmers are paid a set price comparable to what they would receive had they planted. The payment is usually half in cash and half in certificates that may be sold for more than face value.

● **Loans.**

In a 1987 Commodity Fact Sheet, the ASCS said, "Producers must reduce their established crop acreage base by 27.5 percent to be eligible for loans, purchases and payments for the 1987 wheat crop." The ASCS said, "Loan rates are established to reflect the relative value of the commodity at its location."

Most loans mature in nine months. According to the fact sheet, "If the loan is not repaid by the final loan maturity date, the Commodity Credit Corporation takes title to the commodity as full payment of the loan and interest charges."

● **Price support programs.**

A farmer is guaranteed a set price on his crop if he takes a loan from the federal government to help finance it. Conservation Reserve program.

Farmers set aside land that is highly erodible for a period of no less than 10 years. The farmer may set his own price, but the government does not have to accept it.

Farmers have the option of choosing programs that will best benefit their own situations.

Information on the programs is available from another branch of the USDA, the Agricultural Services.

Don Miller, a Lincoln agricultural extension agent, said agents help farmers understand the farm programs.

"In-depth questioning on the programs can usually be answered by the ASCS, but we can interpret for the farmer questions like, 'How many acres should I cut back?' and explain the economics of selecting between two different crops," Miller said. "We try to match up different alternatives in the programs."

Nationally, 518,929 farms this year are participating in wheat support programs alone, according to ASCS figures.

Financial aid and school facts available at educational center

By Randy Lyons
Staff Reporter

Students who seek information about financial aid and universities across the nation can find their answers at Lincoln's Educational Planning Center.

Joe Bird, director of the planning center, said the center has more than 100 catalogs from schools around the country. The catalogs contain details about programs at the colleges, characteristics of the student populations and the costs of attending the institutions, he said.

The center, at 3206 O St., opened Sept. 14. It was developed by the Nebraska Student Loan Program, a guarantee agency that assures a lender loans will be paid back should the student default.

"We believe that along with guaranteeing student loans we also need to educate students about the choices that are available to them," he said.

The planning center also provides five computer terminals and a software package called "The Student Loan Counselor."

Students using this program enter figures from income tax forms and their financial records. The program determines their financial standing and the approximate amount of financial aid they qualify for.

If a student needs to borrow additional money through a student loan program, Bird said, the software can estimate the amount the student will need to borrow to complete his education. From this

total, the center can inform the student how much money will have to be paid back each month after graduation.

Students should know this information before they borrow money, he said.

If the catalogs and computers aren't enough to help students find the information they're looking for, the planning center also provides a WATS line so schools can be contacted directly.

"Our services are open to all students, including high school, free of charge," Bird said. "We are here to assist students in the selection of the higher education of their choice and we have good people with good knowledge."

To celebrate FarmAid III, the Nebraska Student Loan Program gave more than 5,000 red bandannas to students and parents visiting the centers in Lincoln, Omaha and Kearney.

"We're not trying to jump on the FarmAid bandwagon," Bird said. "We feel that agriculture and education are the two most important things to the state, and we just want people to know that we are here to help."

The loan program established two other planning centers in the state. An Omaha center opened August 1986 to serve a heavy concentration of students and leaders in that area.

The planning center in Kearney opened this spring.

The Lincoln center is open to assist students and parents Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon.

World peace concern brings anti-nuke advocates to U.S.; Swedes say Americans are supportive

By Victoria Ayotte
Staff Reporter

Promoting world peace and getting support for the nuclear test ban treaty brought Ingela Martensson, a member of the Swedish parliament, to Lincoln last week.

Martensson is on a mission with a group of nine Swedes who arrived in the United States last Monday. The group traveled to Washington, D.C., and Atlanta before splitting up to visit other areas of the country.

A comprehensive test ban treaty will solve the spread of nuclear

weapon capability, Martensson said.

"If you don't test anymore, you won't modernize and develop new nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons will not spread to other countries," she said. "A test ban treaty is necessary for all countries, not just the superpowers."

Another major concern with nuclear testing is radiation, she said.

"We can see with the Chernobyl accident, it spread worldwide. We in Sweden suffered for this," she said.

Martensson also said she believes there are more important priorities than nuclear weapons, such as world

hunger.

Some Swedes think Americans support nuclear buildup, Martensson said.

"I am very glad to meet so many activists (in the United States). I don't think people in Sweden know about them," she said.

Peace activists around the world must work together, she said.

The group's visit was supported by the Quakers and the Center for Defense Information. In Nebraska, Nebraskans for Peace and other local agencies have supported the organization.

Short

Perkins National Direct Student Loans for first semester will be issued today and Wednesday from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and from 1 to 4 p.m.

Checks can be picked up in the Nebraska Union Ballroom today and in the union's Georgian Suite on Wednesday.

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