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HOW IDAHO FARMERS VIEW  
AGRICULTURAL  
AND  
FOOD POLICY ISSUES

by

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### Introduction

Many farm operators are expressing increasing concern over the possible future direction of agriculture. Though governmental policies and programs have always been an influence on the organization of agricultural production, farm owners are subject to more public regulation now than at any earlier time in the nation's history. All indications suggest an increasing public role in the future.

"Farming is a risky business" is a statement often made and generally accepted. Today's soaring costs, corporate competition, and ineffective policies make this even more so. Many farmers feel that federal agencies have assumed too much power and are not set up to serve the public good as originally intended. Though most would suggest we need at least some government involvement in our lives the question is where do we draw the line between too much and too little government?

During May and June 1984, a sample of 1500 Idaho farmers/ranchers were mailed a questionnaire to find out their views on key agricultural and food policy issues that will be discussed and debated when Congress writes a new Agricultural and Food Act in 1985. Useable responses were received from 558 farmers, giving us a 35.1% response rate. This publication summarizes all the responses and divides them among farmers with different types of farming operations.

## Idaho Farmers View on Agricultural and Food Policy Issues

### Price Support and Commodity Programs

Idaho farmers differ some on what they would like to see as the future direction of production and price support policy after 1985. The most predominant feeling from 34 percent of those responding was to eliminate set-aside, price support and government storage programs. The next most frequent response by 25 percent was to keep present voluntary programs with minor revisions. Only 13 percent wanted to have a mandatory set-aside and price support program in years of excess supply with all producers required to participate if approved in a farmer referendum. The concept of re-establishing acreage allotments and marketing quotas for each farm as a basis for price support appealed to even fewer farmers (only 9%). The remaining 19% were undecided, had other responses or did not answer the question. See Table 1.

The strongest support to eliminate set-aside programs comes from lower income farmers with gross annual sales under \$40,000 per year and among those farmers whose major source of farm income is from livestock.

Although the idea of keeping present voluntary programs with minor revisions was less popular than eliminating set-aside programs altogether, strongest support seems to come from larger farmers with gross annual sales over \$200,000. Those whose major income source is field crops are also more inclined to favor voluntary programs than livestock farmers.

Slightly more support for mandatory set-aside programs comes from middle income farmers with gross annual sales between \$40,000 and \$199,000 and from field crop producers, though there is not a significant difference among any of the groups.

#### Target Prices and Deficiency Payments

Idaho farmers are almost equally divided as to how they feel about target prices and deficiency payments. Although they add to government program costs and the current Administration tried to eliminate them in 1981, 45 percent of those responding would like to see them continued in new agricultural legislation. However, an almost equal 40 percent oppose their continuation.

The income group whose majority did not favor continuing target prices was livestock producers with annual gross sales under \$40,000. Details are shown in Table 2.

If target prices were continued, farmers were asked where they should be set compared with 1984. Forty nine percent of Idaho farmers had no response to this question. About 25 percent would like to see them higher, and another 20 percent would like to see them stay the same. Only 2 percent would like to see them lower. The remaining 4 percent had

no opinion. See Table 3 for details.

Strongest support for higher target prices is centered among larger income livestock producers. Very few of any income level or type of farming operation were in favor of lower target prices.

Of those who favor keeping target prices the same as in 1984, the predominant income group was the \$40,000-199,000 range. Field crop and dairy farmers are the two most in favor of keeping them the same.

#### Acreage Diversion Payments

Acreage diversion payments were authorized in the 1981 Agricultural and Food Act. Once again farmers were almost equally divided on whether these payments should be continued in future programs with 44 percent thinking not and another 43 percent favoring the continuation of diversion payments. Fourteen percent of the producers were not sure or did not respond to the question.

Farmers with gross sales over \$200,000 tended to show the most support for diversion payments. Half of the lowest income farmers were opposed to the continuation of these payments. Field crop and mixed crop and livestock farmers responded most favorably to continued acreage diversion payments. The most opposition was definitely among livestock and dairy farmers. See Table 4.

#### The Farmer Owned Grain Reserve

The farmer owned grain reserve concept with storage payments was established in the Food and Agricultural Act of 1977. Modifications were made in the Agricultural and Food Act of 1981.

Almost half of all Idaho farmers responding favored continuing the farmer-owned grain reserve. Those in the \$40,000-199,000 income group showed the strongest support for the reserve with 50 percent responding in favor. The larger farmers were most widely represented in the 31 percent not in favor of continuing the reserve. Most farmers in favor were dairy and mixed crop and livestock producers and while those opposed were fairly equally divided between all types of farming operations. See Table 5.

Closely related to the issue of continuing a farmer owned reserve is the policy of determining how large the reserve should be and who should be responsible to make decisions about it. Among the 3 alternatives presented in our survey, 26 percent of the respondents wanted to set a limit based on the percent of the previous year's use, 8 percent wanted no limit set on the size of the reserve and an equally small 8 percent wanted to let the Secretary of Agriculture set the limit on the amount. Almost half of the respondents did not answer the question, and the remaining 8 percent were not sure how they felt about it. A majority or near majority of all income groups and major type of farm income groups supported the concept of setting reserve limits based on a percentage of the previous years actual use of that commodity. See Table 6.

#### Setting Loan Rates

Over the years since the first price support legislation was passed, loan rates for storable commodities have been based on a percentage of parity, as a percentage of the average market price at designated times and places, at an estimated cash cost of production, and at other times

by compromise among various interests in the legislative process.

In the questionnaire, farmers were asked to agree or disagree with the statement that loan rates for price supported commodities should be based on a percent of the average market price for the past 3 to 5 years. 46 percent of those who answered the question either agreed or strongly agreed, 29 percent disagreed to a greater or lesser degree, and 20 percent were not sure enough to decide one way or the other. Only 5 percent did not answer. Dairymen and mixed crop and livestock farmers were the majority in agreement. Details are shown in Table 7.

#### The Payment-In-Kind Program

In 1983, the most widespread use of the payment in kind (PIK) program occurred. It also contributed to record high cost for farm programs. Respondents were asked if they thought the Payment-in-Kind program should be used again if large stock reappeared. The majority, 48 percent, thought this program should be discontinued. A little over a third (37%) supported the program, and 15 percent were not sure or did not answer the question. The majority of medium sized field crop farmers favored use of the PIK program again if stocks were large. Likewise, field crop producers were predominant in those not in favor of continuing the program. Details are shown in Table 8

#### More Benefits for Small Farms

Almost half the farmers surveyed felt that future programs should be changed to give most price and income support benefit to small and medium sized farms with gross annual sales under \$40,000, forty percent

disagreed and 12 percent were not sure or did not respond. Not surprisingly, those whose income was \$40,000 or less were the greatest supporters of this idea and those whose income was above \$40,000 were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree. Forty three percent of the farmers whose annual income was over \$200,000 were strongly opposed to favoring the smaller farmer in future farm programs. Of the total who answered the question, more were field crop producers than anything else, however 65 percent of the livestock producers and 58 percent of the mixed crop and livestock producers also supported the concept of more benefits to the smaller farmer. See Table 11 for details.

#### Payment Limitations

The 1981 Agricultural and Food Act placed a limit of \$50,000 on direct payments to any individual.

What about payment limitations as a means of providing more benefits to smaller farmers and limiting benefits to larger farm operations? The most frequent response was to make no change with 37 percent. An almost equal 35 percent would decrease the limit. 11 percent would prefer eliminating the limit completely and 10% would increase the limit. 7% did not answer the question. The middle income farmers with gross sales of \$40,000 and up most frequently favored making no change and increasing the limit and 51 percent making under \$40,000 gross annual sales wanted the limit decreased. Details are shown in Table 12.

Among the different types of farmers, more dairy producers wanted no change made on the present limit and more livestock producers wanted to see the limit decreased.



### Making Major Program Changes

What if major program changes were required? When given a choice of a low "safety net" loan and target price program, a farm income insurance plan or another plan they would suggest, 39 percent of the farmers would prefer a low "safety" net loan and target price program. Somewhat fewer (28 percent) would replace commodity programs with a farm income insurance plan with costs shared by farmers and government and 33 percent had either other preferences for changes in government funding or did not respond to the question.

Dairy and livestock producers of the middle income group showed more preference for the target price program while those with annual gross sales of \$40,000 or less showed most preference for the farm income insurance idea. Details are shown in Table 13.

### The Role of Soil Conservation

How did farmers feel about tying soil conservation to price support program benefits? When it was suggested that each farmer should follow approved soil conservation measures on his farm to qualify for price and income support programs, 57 percent of all farmers responding agreed. This strong agreement appeared in all income classes with slightly more support from the lowest income group and from dairy and livestock operators.

Another 33 percent disagreed with the idea that farmers should follow soil conservation measures to qualify for support. Details are shown in Table 9.

Idaho farmers are generally in consensus on a policy for distributing funds for soil conservation programs. While 20 percent would give funds to all states in proportion to the number of farms 57 percent think that more funds should be given to those states with the most severe erosion problems. No major differences in responses were noted among the different income classes or type of farming. Details are shown in Table 10.

#### Dairy Price Support Programs

The special incentive program to encourage dairy farmers to reduce production passed by Congress in late 1983 and went into effect earlier this year. All farmers were asked if payments for production cut-back by dairy farmers should be continued if milk production was still excessive in 1985. Among all farmers responding, 30 percent agreed that it should be continued, 48 percent did not favor continuing, and another 20 percent were not sure. There were not great differences in answers among income classes, but of the types of farmers, fewer livestock farmers are in favor of continuing the program than other types of farmers. See Table 14.

What effect is the milk incentive program likely to have on the number of milk cows on farms by the end of 1985? Since 77 percent of all respondents reported no milk cows on their farm, the sample of dairy farmers was small (128). Among the dairy farmers, 16 percent expected to have more cows on hand, 65 percent expected to have about the same as now, and 14 percent expected to have less. Details are shown in Table 15.

### Natural Disasters and Federal Crop Insurance

Which government policy would farmers prefer to deal with farm production risks from natural disasters? Among all respondents, 44 percent would continue present all risk crop insurance where producers pay about 70 percent and government pays about 30 percent of the cost, 16 percent favored returning to disaster payments where government pays all the costs, and 17 percent would just eliminate all disaster payments and Federal Crop Insurance programs. 24 percent were not sure, had other suggestions or did not answer the question. Differences in responses among farmers in different sales classes was not large. Dairy farmers responded most favorably to continuing present risk insurance. Details are shown in Table 18.

How do farmers view federal all-risk crop insurance? The most predominant response suggests that many farmers are not well informed about it since 45 percent had no opinion at all. Only 14 percent thought it was a good buy, with another 32 percent thinking it too expensive and 9 percent no response. In terms of coverage available, 43 percent had no opinion, 10 percent did not respond, 29 percent thought it inadequate. 18 percent said the coverage was adequate. In terms of understanding, once again 47 percent had no opinion and 11 percent did not respond to the question at all. 28 percent thought the Federal Crop Insurance program was complicated, and only 14 percent thought it easy to understand.

Farmers of the middle income group had more favorable feelings on the value of the insurance, adequacy of coverage and were more likely to think that crop insurance was easy to understand. More farmers with

gross sales over \$200,000 thought crop insurance too expensive. All categories were quite negative about the program. Details are shown in Tables 19, 20, and 21.

### Credit Policy

The Farmers Home Administration was established to provide credit to farmers who could not get credit from other sources. Farmers were asked which credit policy they preferred for present Farmers Home Administration borrowers. Among all farmers responding, 48 percent favored continuing the present policy of not foreclosing unless all repayment efforts have failed. Although moratoriums have been discussed among various farm groups only 15 percent said that a moratorium should be provided on all foreclosures to keep distressed borrowers operating until the economy improves. The second most frequent response (22 percent) was to set a stricter policy on delinquent loans and increase the number of foreclosures. Another 6 percent favored a moratorium on foreclosures only for selected young "deserving" farmers.

Not surprisingly, the lowest income group most strongly favored the continuation of present policy and providing a moratorium on foreclosures. The \$200,000 and over income group would like a stricter policy and an increase in foreclosures.

Among farmers with various sources of income, more of those with mixed crops and livestock and dairy favored the present policy than other types of farmers. Details are shown in Table 17.

Program Administration

For over 50 years, farm commodity policy decisions have been made by Congress and administered by the Secretary of Agriculture. In recent years Congress has tried to restrict the discretionary authority of the Secretary of Agriculture in administering the farm price support programs. At times the Secretary of Agriculture has been restricted in his policy making options by Congressional actions.

In the survey, farmers were asked who should make the major farm commodity program decisions. The responses show that farmers are divided on the various administrative choices.

Among all respondents, 21 percent favor continuing the present system with the Congress and the Secretary of Agriculture sharing the decision making. However, 19 percent would have the President appoint an independent board or commission operating under congressional guidelines with farmers, agribusiness and consumers represented.

The most frequent response came from 46 percent of all respondents who would let producers organize, control and finance their own supply management program without government involvement. The recent operation of the producer financed tobacco marketing and support program may be an example of this approach.

Among the various income classes there were not large differences in regards to keeping the present system. A larger percentage in the largest income group favored the independent board of commission than the medium and lower income groups. The idea of producer organized and controlled programs received the most favorable response from the lowest income farmers. Field crop farmers are a little more supportive of the

present system than other types of farmers, and livestock farmers are most supportive of producer organized, controlled and financed program administration. See Table 16.

#### Food Stamp Expenditures

In recent years expenditures on food stamps have been around \$12 billion per year. Some observers believe that the support for food stamp programs by members of Congress working for price support and income programs provides the trade-off necessary to get votes for farm price commodity programs from urban members of Congress.

Farmers are divided on their recommendations for expenditures on food stamps. Among all respondents, 33 percent would decrease expenditures, 23 percent would keep them about the same, 28 percent would eliminate them completely, with only 3 percent that would increase expenditures. The remaining 12 percent had no opinion or did not respond.

Differences among farmers in different sales groups are not large but the largest operators are more inclined to eliminate food stamps than other sales groups. In terms of types of farms, more dairymen would decrease the amount spent or eliminate food stamps completely. Details are shown in Table 22.

#### Agricultural Trade Policy

Agricultural exports have added an important new dimension to agricultural marketing and policy in recent years. Farmers were asked to respond to a list of proposals for increasing agricultural exports.

Match the export subsidies of our competitors? More farmers favored

this approach than opposed it. Slightly more of the largest farmers favored this idea than the smaller farmers. A majority of the farmers with all different sources of farm income also seem to favor this policy, though a good percentage of all income and income source groups were not sure how they felt about it. Details of this question and other trade issues are shown in Table 23.

Encourage lower trade barriers by major importers? Again a majority of all farmers, all income classes, and all types of farming operations favored this farming policy. Twenty percent said they were not sure.

Lower U.S. support prices? This proposed policy brought more opposition than any other proposal to increase agricultural exports. Less than 30 percent of all farmers in all sales groups agreed with this proposed policy to increase exports.

Establish a marketing board? 48 percent of all farmers agreed with this approach, 15 percent opposed it, 11 percent did not respond and another 26 percent were not sure how they felt about the idea. The upper two income levels favored a marketing board almost equally with the lowest income level being the most in favor. The majority of farmers with all income sources also favored this approach.

Promote bilateral trade agreements? A substantial proportion of all farmers agreed with this approach to raise exports, and only 6 percent disagreed. 36% were either not sure or did not respond to the question. All income levels and income sources were in favor.

Join an export cartel? Although 27 percent of all farmers agreed with this approach to raise exports, another 31 percent disagreed and a large 44 percent were not sure or did not respond to this question.

Differences were not great among income levels but in terms of type of farming operation, dairy farmers responded with the highest percentage of uncertainty.

Provide more funds for food aid? Among all farmers responding, 45 percent agreed with this approach, 29 percent disagreed, and 26 percent either were not sure or did not answer. Field crops and mixed crops and livestock farmers were most in agreement. With income levels, the higher the income, the stronger the agreement.

Strengthen the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade? How much the farmers surveyed really knew about GATT was not explored. However, among all farmers, 65 percent agreed that strengthening GATT as a means of expanding agricultural exports was a good idea. Farmers in all sales groups and types of farming favored this approach.

Expand farmer-financed market development programs? Joint market development efforts between the Foreign Agricultural Service and private commodity and industry groups have been carried on for several years. Sixty one percent of the respondents favored this idea. Likewise, all sales groups and types of farming supported such efforts.

Set up a two price plan? Respondents were asked if they favored setting up a two price plan with a higher price for commodities used in the domestic market and let exports sell at world market price. Slightly more (33 percent) agreed than disagreed (26 percent) with this approach and a larger 42 percent were either not sure or did not respond. Among farmers in the different income classes, slightly more disagreed than agreed with this idea and a substantial percentage among all income levels and types of farmers were not sure how they felt about the two



price plan.

### Farmers' Views on Fiscal Policy

Idaho farmers are very adamant about fiscal matters and budget deficits. When given a statement that we should keep things as they are and not worry about balancing the budget, 85 percent of the farmers disagreed. Respondents in all sales classes and types of farming groups responded about the same. The question also had one of the lowest percentages of not sure answers of any question in the survey. Details of this question dealing with fiscal policy are shown in Table 24.

Farmers also believe strongly (83 percent) that we should reduce the deficit in order to reduce interest rates for borrowers. This question only elicited 4 percent disagreement, 4 percent not sure responses and 8 percent non-response. All sales groups and different types of farming operations responded in strong agreement.

Should the government freeze federal expenditures and raise taxes? Among all respondents, 48 percent disagreed with this idea, 29 percent agreed and another 24 percent were not sure or did not answer the question. Among all income levels, more farmers opposed this approach than favored it. Of those types of farmers that were in any agreement at all to freezing federal expenditures, the livestock groups were most in favor.

Is reducing the deficit to reduce the debt burden on future generations a good idea? 83 percent think so. All sales classes and types of farms responded about the same to this question.

Should the federal budget be balanced even if it means a substantial

cut in all government programs including farm price and income supports? A majority at 73 percent agreed that the federal budget should be reduced even if it meant farm price support programs had to be reduced. All sales groups and all types of farmers showed a strong majority for balancing the budget and cutting all government programs.

#### Thoughts on Future Price Levels

In the last half of our survey of Idaho farmers, we asked some questions relating to their knowledge of price levels and their thoughts about their own farming operation.

When asked how farmers expect the future general price level in this country to compare to the general price level for the past 10 years, 54 percent of the respondents thought it would be higher. Over the next 30 years as compared to the past 10 years, 67 percent expected it to go even higher.

Then we asked how they expected the future price level for certain specific items to compare to the general price level for all goods. Forty percent expected land prices to get higher, the highest income level producers particularly had these expectations. Seventy four percent of the farmers expected fertilizer and herbicide prices to increase. Seventy three percent expected diesel fuel prices to increase. Sixty eight percent expected the cost of hired labor to increase. Seventy nine percent expected machinery prices to increase. A majority of the farmers expected wheat, barley, potato, peas, sugar beet, lentil, hay and bean prices to stay about the same. Producers from different income levels and types of farming operations showed no great

differences in expectations.

#### Sources of New Information

How good of a guide do you think each of the following would be as to whether to incorporate a new farming technique? Extension specialists, friends and neighbors, soil conservation district personnel, Agricultural Experiment Station Research and if most of other farmers are using it were all thought to be a good guide for trying a new technique. Farmers in general are not sure about trying a new technique if farm magazines suggest it or if they heard about it on radio or TV. If a company fieldman or literature salesman promoted a new technique, they are not likely to pay much heed at all. Income levels or types of farmers did not show a significant difference in this attitude.

#### Thoughts About Soil Erosion

Most respondents, when asked about soil erosion and sediment loss on their own farm felt that it was either not a problem or only a slight problem. Only 5 percent said it was a severe problem.

When asked about their opinions, most feel they are doing just about everything they can possibly do to control erosion on their own farm. There is 84 percent disagreement with the suggestion that there is no need to worry about soil erosion because it doesn't have any effect on yields. Most disagree with the statement "If I were to do more than I now do to control soil erosion, my yields would go down quite a bit". Forty two percent disagreed that the amount of soil lost through erosion is about the same now as it was 20 years ago. Another major disagreement

was with the suggestion that farmers in this area aren't very concerned about soil erosion on their farms. Respondents don't think regulation is necessary to adequately control erosion but they do believe that unless soil erosion is controlled to a greater extent than it presently is, yields will decrease quite a bit in the next 10 to 20 years. And lastly, they do not blame soil erosion on weather and topography.

The majority of farmers of all income levels say they are using most of the available erosion control practices and a slightly smaller group says they are using at least some of the available practices. Only 6 percent admit to not using any of the practices.

Are farmers willing to take a reasonable reduction in annual profits per acre to achieve an elimination of erosion? It appears debatable as to what is reasonable. Twenty seven percent feel no reduction per acre is the most reasonable, 16 percent are willing to accept \$1-\$2 per acre and another 24 percent say they would accept \$3-\$5 per acre income reduction to alleviate erosion. Only 21 percent would accept a \$6 or more reduction in profit per acre. Interestingly, more of the \$200,000 gross income and above farmers were unwilling to accept an income reduction per acre than the lower income farmers.

#### Profile of Farmers Responding to the Survey

Efforts were made to draw a sample of representative Idaho farmers. The responses to the questions suggest that the sample was reasonably representative.

Farm program participation. Among all respondents, 29 percent participated in the wheat acreage reduction program and 25 percent in the

wheat Payment In Kind program in 1983. Nineteen percent participated in the feed grains acreage reduction program and another 6 percent in the PIK program. A higher proportion of the farmers with over \$200,000 gross sales participated in the wheat acreage reduction, feed grains acreage reduction and the feed grain PIK program than those in the lower sales groups. As we might expect a higher proportion of grain and mixed grain and livestock farmers participated in the acreage reduction programs than livestock and dairy farmers. Details are shown in Table 25.

Ages of Respondents. All ages of farmers participated in the survey. The greatest percentage, 40 percent were of the 50-64 year old group, 34 percent were 35-49, 11 percent under 35 and 15 percent 65 years or older. See Table 26.

Size of farms. All sizes of farms were represented. Among all respondents, 50 percent farmed under 339 acres, 18 percent farmed 340-649 acres, 14 percent farmed 650-1199 acres, and another 18 percent farmed 1200 or more acres. See Table 27.

Tenure of operator. All types of tenure were reported. The reports show that 17 percent owned under 25 percent of the land they farm, 13 percent owned from 26-50 percent, 10 percent owned 51-75 percent and half owned 76-100 percent of their farm land. See Table 28.

Gross Sales. Among all respondents, 37 percent reported gross sales of \$40,000 or less, 44 percent fell into the \$40,000-199,000 category, and 15 percent approximated their annual gross sales at \$200,000 and up. There was a 4 percent non-response to this question. See Table 29.

Most important source of 1983 farm income. Field crop farmers dominated the sample at 44 percent. Next were mixed crop and livestock

farmers at 25 percent. 13 percent were strictly livestock farmers, 10 percent were dairymen and 6 percent farmed something else. 2 percent did not respond. See Table 30.

Amount of formal education. Respondents represented a wide range of schooling. In general, Idaho farmers are well-educated; 22 percent graduated from college; 32 percent had some college or technical school; and 30 percent were high school graduates. Only 9 percent of the producers reported "some high school" and 6 percent reported grade school. See Table 31.

Income from off-farm sources. A majority of the respondents received a major portion of the family income from farming. While 58 percent reported that 24 percent or less of the farm family income was from off farm sources; 11 percent received 25-49 percent; 7 percent received 50-74 percent and 10 percent received 75-100 percent of the family income from off farm employment or investments. Fourteen percent did not answer the question. See Table 32.

Farm and Commodity Organization Memberships. More farmers belonged to the Farm Bureau than any other organization; this was 30 percent of respondents. Another 26 percent belonged to Wheat Producers and 21 percent were affiliated with the Cattlemen's Association. Eleven percent of the farmers were Milk Producers. All other general farm organizations had 10 percent or fewer of the sample as members. Detailed figures are shown in Table 33.

### Summary and Conclusions

Idaho farmers are divided on some agricultural and economic policy issues but on many they do agree. The issues on which a majority or more agree are:

- States with the most severe soil erosion problems should be given more funds.

- Policies to increase agricultural exports, encourage lower trade barriers by major importers, promote bilateral trade agreements with minimum purchases and export guarantees, strengthen the General Agreement on Tariffs on Trade (GATT) to facilitate more free trade, and expand farmer financed foreign market development programs.

- On fiscal policy, producers agreed deficit should be reduced to reduce interest rates and reduce the debt burden on future generations.

- Producers agreed the federal budget should be balanced even if it means a substantial cut in all government programs including farm price and income supports.

Although not a majority response, the following issues seemed to draw a consensus favored by 40 percent or more of all respondents:

- Target prices and deficiency payments should be continued in the 1985 farm bill.

- Payments for acreage diversion should be continued.

- A farmer-owned grain reserve should be continued.

- Loan rates for all price supported commodities should be based on a

percent of the average market price for the past 3-5 years.

-The present FHA policy of not foreclosing unless all repayment efforts have failed should be continued.

-The present all risk crop insurance where producers pay about 70 percent and government pays about 30 percent of the cost should be continued.

-Future farm programs should be changed to give most benefits to producers with gross annual sales under \$40,000.

-The payment-in-kind program should not be used again if large stocks reappear.

-The milk incentive program with payments for dairy farmers should not be continued after 1985.

-To increase export sales, match export subsidies of our competitors, establish a marketing board, and provide more funds for food aid to hungry nations.

-In terms of who should make future policy decisions, producers should be allowed to organize, control and finance their own supply management program without government involvement.

-That we should not freeze present federal expenditures and raise taxes as a way of balancing the budget.

The issues on which Idaho farmers are most divided are:

-Whether future policy direction should continue voluntary programs, shift to mandatory set aside and price support programs or eliminate set aside, price support and government storage programs completely.

-Where target prices should be set compared to 1984.



-If a grain reserve is continued, whether there should be no policy on size of reserve, let the Secretary of Agriculture set the limit, or have limit based on a percent of the previous year's use.

-The value, adequacy of coverage and the ease of understanding federal crop insurance.

-If major changes are required in funding government programs, whether there should be a low "safety net" loan and target price program or whether commodity programs should be replaced with a farm income insurance plan with costs shared by farmers and government.

-Whether the present limit on direct payments of \$50,000 to each farmer per year should be increased, decreased, left as is, or eliminated completely.

-Whether support prices should be lowered to increase export sales.

-Whether the U.S. should join an export cartel with other major exporters to increase export sales.

-Whether a two-price plan should be set up with a higher price for commodities used in the domestic market and a lower price in the export market.













Table 12. Preferred Policy on Payment Limitations.

|                                | Gross Sales                       |                |                  |                | Major Source of Farm Income |                   |                           |       |       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
|                                | All Farmers <sup>2/</sup> Percent | Over \$200,000 | \$40,000 199,000 | Under \$40,000 | Grain                       | Hogs, Beef Cattle | Mixed Grain and Livestock | Dairy | Other |
| Increase the limit             | 10                                | 26             | 11               | 2              | 17                          | 4                 | 4                         | 3     | 12    |
| Make no change                 | 37                                | 32             | 44               | 33             | 40                          | 24                | 37                        | 43    | 39    |
| Decrease the limit             | 35                                | 14             | 30               | 51             | 28                          | 57                | 35                        | 47    | 33    |
| Eliminate the limit completely | 11                                | 22             | 8                | 9              | 11                          | 10                | 15                        | 2     | 12    |
| No response                    | 7                                 | 6              | 7                | 5              | 6                           | 6                 | 5                         | 9     | 3     |

Table 13. Preferred Policy if Major Program Changes Required.

|  | Gross Sales                       |                |                  |                | Major Source of Farm Income |                   |                           |       |       |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
|  | All Farmers <sup>2/</sup> Percent | Over \$200,000 | \$40,000 199,000 | Under \$40,000 | Grain                       | Hogs, Beef Cattle | Mixed Grain and Livestock | Dairy | Other |
| A low "safety net" loan and target price | 39                                | 35             | 42               | 37             | 39                          | 43                | 38                        | 47    | 27    |
| Farm income insurance                    | 28                                | 29             | 25               | 33             | 25                          | 25                | 30                        | 31    | 43    |
| Other                                    | 19                                | 18             | 19               | 17             | 20                          | 21                | 16                        | 16    | 18    |
| No response                              | 14                                | 19             | 14               | 13             | 16                          | 12                | 16                        | 7     | 12    |































Table 24. (continued)

|                            | Gross Sales                             |                   |                     |                   | Major Source of Farm Income |                         |                                 |       |       |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
|                            | All<br>Farmers <sup>2/</sup><br>Percent | Over<br>\$200,000 | \$40,000<br>199,000 | Under<br>\$40,000 | Grain                       | Hogs,<br>Beef<br>Cattle | Mixed<br>Grain and<br>Livestock | Dairy | Other |
| <u>Balance Budget--Cut</u> |   |                   |                     |                   |                             |                         |                                 |       |       |
| <u>All Government</u>      |   |                   |                     |                   |                             |                         |                                 |       |       |
| <u>Programs Including</u>  |   |                   |                     |                   |                             |                         |                                 |       |       |
| <u>Farm Price Supports</u> |   |                   |                     |                   |                             |                         |                                 |       |       |
| Strongly agree             | 40                                      | 44                | 45                  | 38                | 39                          | 42                      | 41                              | 44    | 58    |
| Agree                      | 33                                      | 27                | 36                  | 38                | 36                          | 44                      | 34                              | 33    | 23    |
| Not sure                   | 10                                      | 5                 | 10                  | 12                | 11                          | 7                       | 12                              | 9     | 10    |
| Disagree                   | 9                                       | 21                | 7                   | 8                 | 12                          | 4                       | 9                               | 12    | 3     |
| Strongly disagree          | 3                                       | 4                 | 3                   | 4                 | 3                           | 3                       | 4                               | 2     | 7     |
| No response                | 5                                       |                   |                     |                   |                             |                         |                                 |       |       |

Table 25. Participation in 1983 Farm Programs

|                                  | Gross Sales                             |                   |                     |                   | Major Source of Farm Income |                         |                                 |       |       |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
|                                  | All<br>Farmers <sup>2/</sup><br>Percent | Over<br>\$200,000 | \$40,000<br>199,000 | Under<br>\$40,000 | Grain                       | Hogs,<br>Beef<br>Cattle | Mixed<br>Grain and<br>Livestock | Dairy | Other |
| Wheat acreage<br>reduction       | 29                                      | 70                | 63                  | 41                | 67                          | 39                      | 49                              | 38    | 41    |
| Wheat PIK                        | 25                                      | 59                | 57                  | 33                | 61                          | 34                      | 43                              | 24    | 38    |
| Feed grains acreage<br>reduction | 19                                      | 55                | 43                  | 33                | 46                          | 23                      | 44                              | 39    | 41    |
| Feed grain PIK                   | 6                                       | 25                | 10                  | 14                | 14                          | 4                       | 21                              | 18    | 12    |

Table 26. Age of Respondents

|             | <u>All Farmers (percent)</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| Under 35    | 11                           |
| 35-49       | 34                           |
| 50-64       | 40                           |
| 65 and over | 15                           |

Table 27. Number of Acres Farmed

|               | <u>All Farmers (percent)</u> |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Under 339     | 50                           |
| 340-649       | 18                           |
| 650-1199      | 14                           |
| 1200 and over | 18                           |

Table 28. Percent of Land Owned

|          | <u>All Farmers (percent)</u> |
|----------|------------------------------|
| Under 25 | 17                           |
| 26-50    | 13                           |
| 51-75    | 10                           |
| 76-100   | 50                           |
| N.R.     | 10                           |

Table 29. Annual Gross Sales in Recent Years

|                    | <u>All Farmers (percent)</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| \$40,000 or less   | 37                           |
| \$40,000-\$199,999 | 44                           |
| \$200,000 and over | 15                           |
| No response        | 4                            |

Table 30. Most Important Source of 1983 Farm Income

|                           | <u>All Farmers (percent)</u> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Grain                     | 44                           |
| Hogs, beef cattle         | 13                           |
| Mixed grain and livestock | 25                           |
| Dairy                     | 10                           |
| Other                     | 6                            |
| No response               | 2                            |

Table 31. Last Year in School Completed

|                                  | <u>All Farmers (percent)</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Grade school                     | 6                            |
| Some high school                 | 9                            |
| High school graduate             | 30                           |
| Some college or technical school | 32                           |
| Graduated from college           | 22                           |



Table 32. Percent of Farm Family Income From Off Farm Employment or Investments

|             | <u>All Farmers (percent)</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| 0-24        | 58                           |
| 25-49       | 11                           |
| 50-74       | 7                            |
| 75-100      | 10                           |
| No response | 14                           |

Table 33. Membership in Farm and Commodity Organizations

|                                | <u>Percent Reporting</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Farm Bureau                    | 30                       |
| Farmer's Union                 | 3                        |
| Grange                         | 8                        |
| National Farmers Organization  | 4                        |
| American Agricultural Movement | .9                       |
| Cattlemen's Association        | 21                       |
| Pork Producers                 | 1                        |
| Milk Producers                 | 11                       |
| Corn Growers                   | --                       |
| Soybean Association            | .4                       |
| Wheat Producers                | 26                       |
| Labor Union                    | 2                        |

<sup>1/</sup> Columns may not add up to 100 because of rounding to nearest percentage point.

<sup>2/</sup> Total responses have non-responses figured as part of total. Cross tabulations omit the non-responses in the percentage calculations.