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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

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Following is a statement made by Congressman Bob Dole (R-Kansas) on the House floor on Monday, May 13, with reference to efforts by the USDA to sell its programs to the American farmer.

Room 244
Extension 2715

Monday, May 13
For Immediate Release

PROPAGANDA PARADE

Mr. Speaker. This accumulation of mail which I call to the attention of my colleagues has been received by one western Kansas farm family since January 1 of this year. It is all from the County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and consists of a mixture of propaganda for various Freeman farm programs, along with some material of an informational nature. Much of it might be categorized as "junk mail". It is all unsolicited.

There are 20 separate envelopes here--all mailed at government expense to the same farmer since January 1. In some cases he received numerous copies of the same release. His wife, who mailed this material to me, notes that she has retained a stack of correspondence from the ASCS Committee almost as large as the one she sent me. Her letter reads:

"Dear Mr. Dole:

My husband and I think you will be interested in some of the information our local and national ASC office gives out. We have been impressed, unfavorably, with the amount of duplication.

My husband and father-in-law farm together, so to speak, and we live on the farm together. Yet each receives up to five copies of the same material, each copy in a different envelope.

We have received the enclosed material since Jan. 1 of this year. We have kept everything of importance--loan papers, copies of the information, etc. That stack is almost as large as the one we send you.

A lot of farmers around here are getting a little tired of sorting through all of these things to find out what's important.

We are concerned especially about the wheat referendum leaflet--its effect on the small grower, thus the effect on the general vote.

If each ASC office had to account for its postage (a postage meter would be fine), wouldn't that take care of some of the Post Office's problems? I mean five letters in one day, with five copies of the same thing. Really!"

It is not my purpose to cause this Kansas farm family trouble so the names are omitted, however I have the letter here if anyone wishes to examine it, and also the ASCS material forwarded.

(more)

Included in this inventory are four copies of an official USDA pamphlet apparently designed to influence farmers to vote "yes" in the May 21 wheat referendum. The document tells this Kansas farm family--in quadruplicate--that, "Reliable economists, both within and outside the Department of Agriculture, predict that the market price of wheat would drop to about $1 per bushel and that wheat income would decline about $700 million (if quotas are not approved). They also point out that this would have a serious adverse impact on prices for feed grain, livestock and livestock products."

I would appreciate an opportunity to question these anonymous economists on this point, for any economist worth his salt would not say a 60-pound bushel of wheat would bring only $1 dollar a bushel at the same time the government was supporting a 56-pound bushel of corn at $1.25 as in 1963. Such a contention is ridiculous on its face, but it is nevertheless made and presumably has been sent--perhaps in quadruplicate--to every wheat grower in the United States.

Among other items in the inventory of ASCS material sent to the Kansas farm family I have mentioned are:

Four copies of a USDA pamphlet soliciting farmers to sign up for the 1963 feed grain program.

Four releases relating to the barley program, along with three others in different form, also relating to the barley program.

Six identical notices of "Acreages, Yields, Payment Rates for the 1963 Feed Grain Program".

Numerous other mimeographed letters and releases to farmers--in duplicate and triplicate--relating to various farm programs.

The collection is all here for anyone who wishes to examine it.

Clearly the most unmanageable surplus which confronts the Department of Agriculture is not cotton, corn, or wheat, but its own proliferation of printed and mimeographed propaganda. Perhaps the postal deficit would be eliminated, or at least substantially reduced, if Secretary of Agriculture Freeman would send just one--and not half a dozen--of each of his farm program sales brochures to every farm family.

With 5.5 million producers of wheat, barley, corn and other feed grains, not to mention voluminous mailings to thousands of other farmers, the cost must run well into millions of dollars.

Since Postmaster General J. Edward Day is crying "loud and long" about the recent House cut in his postal budget, I suggest he contact Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman, and outline his views on a "supply-management" program for all governmental agencies using the U. S. mails. Freeman should be willing to adopt a "supply-management" program for USDA mailings, similar to the one he constantly advocates for the American farmer, for certainly here is an example of "over supply" and little or no demand.