

# Agriculture

## Farmers deeply disappointed by federal announcement

Ontario farmers have expressed deep disappointment in the announcement by the Federal Government of Third Line of Defence payments. Ontario farm groups urge the Provincial Government to join with the Federal Government in becoming full partners in the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) program.

"Last year saw crop prices lower than during the depression of the 1930's. Despite the Federal Government's earlier commitments to address this disastrous situation with aid based on the principles established by the new safety nets program, notably the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) support levels, today's aid package helps but still falls short", said Roger George, President of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

"Although farmers welcome the implementation of the NISA, we urge the Provincial Government to provide funding in order to allow a higher level of federal commitment," added John Ja-

ques, Chairman of the Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council.

GRIP and NISA were designed as an integral unit. It was expected that the Provincial Government would have been a full partner in both programs. The 3.5 per cent contribution offered by the Federal Government alone does not adequately cover the losses that farmers will incur by not having GRIP in place for the 1990-91 crop year.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council had submitted a proposal to the Federal Government which identified a means of addressing the actual level of hurt and based payment levels on the principles of the new Gross Revenue Insurance Plan. "We are upset that our advice was not followed in developing this assistance package", stated Larry Miehl, Chairman of the Ontario Soybean Growers' Marketing Board.

In order to address the

disastrously low prices in 1990 and resultant income shortfall, Ontario's grains, oilseeds and horticultural producers need over \$200 million for grains and oilseeds and \$70 million for the horticultural sector.

George Dmetriuc, Chairman of the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board, added that "We appreciate the \$120 million in cash or payment-in-kind over two years provided by this program and assistance provided to alleviate Ontario Wheat Board deficits but it does not approach the income shortfalls caused by the intensifying U.S. and E.E.C. trade war."

Still outstanding for the 1990-91 crop year is national equity for all Canadian farmers in relation to hostile international trading practices.

Ontario farm groups are very supportive of the GRIP program and do appreciate the 25 per cent reduction in farmers' GRIP premiums.

## Feeder cattle program

TORONTO - A two-year pilot program designed to facilitate the financing of Ontario's feeder cattle industry was announced by Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food Elmer Buchanan and Ontario Cattlemen's Association President David Whittington.

The Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program enables cattle feeders to work cooperatively to finance the purchase of their cattle.

Twenty or more cattlemen may form a feeder finance association, under the Cooperative Corporations Act, for the purpose of negotiating cattle loans. The association, which retains ownership of the cattle, may be able to negotiate a preferential interest rate since it will apply for one large loan, as opposed to several smaller loans.

"This program will greatly enhance the flexibility and availability of credit for Ontario cattle feeders. As a result, it will help increase the competitiveness of Ontario's cattle feeding industry," Buchanan said.

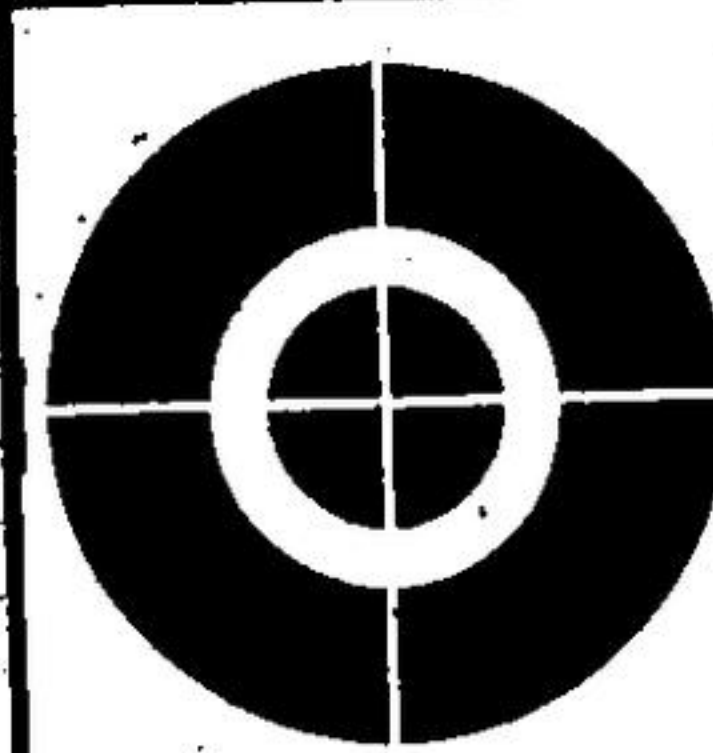
The program is a co-operative effort between the ministry, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association and the Ontario Agricultural Committee of the Canadian Bankers' Association.

"The Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program is one of the planks Ontario cattle feeders can use to strengthen the cattle feeding business in Ontario. It will provide an alternative source of credit by working with a traditional lender but through a producer controlled co-operative," said Douglas Gear, a member of OCA's executive committee and chairman of the sub-committee which developed the feeder loan guarantee project proposal.

The ministry will provide a 25 per cent government guarantee on association loans. It will also provide each association with a start-up grant of \$10,000 to help defray initial costs.

"This program reflects the co-operative, self-help approach we are committed to developing in agricultural finance," Buchanan said.

"We think the program will have application for many cattlemen. As we move into the operational phase of the project we hope the spirit of cooperation can continue," Gear said.



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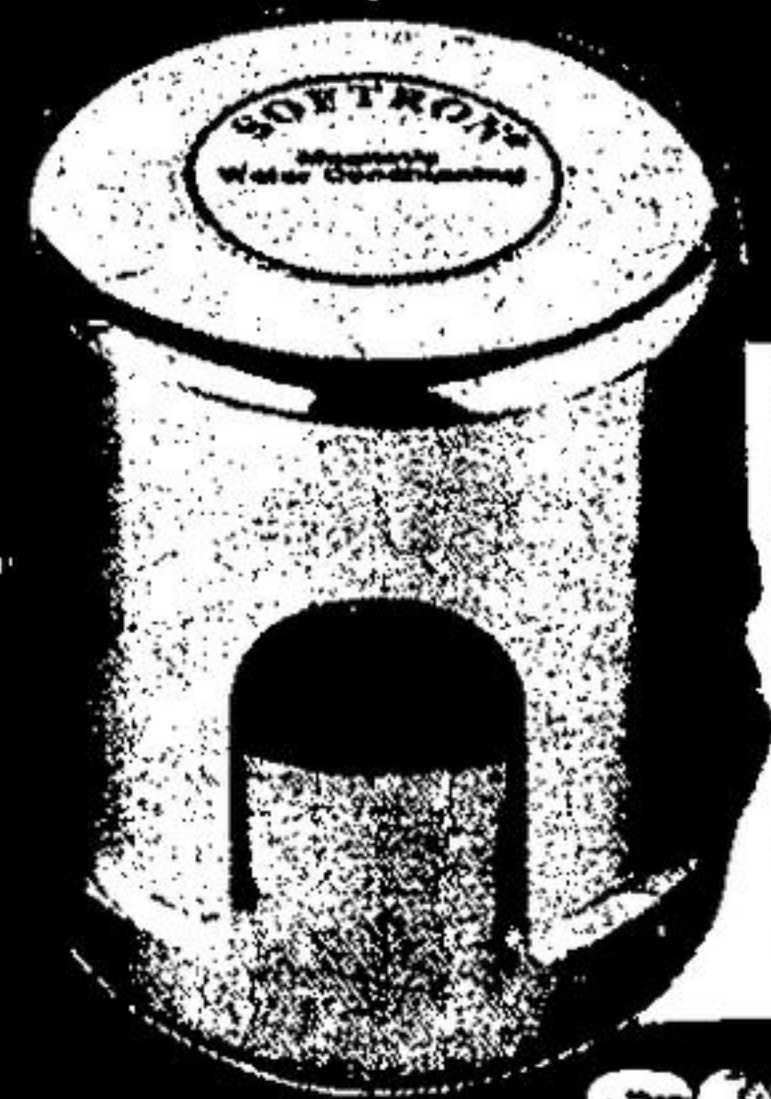
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