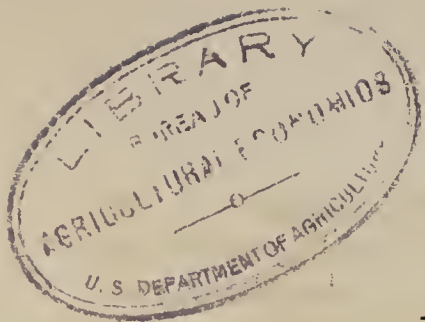


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THE 1937 AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN
THE NORTHEASTERN STATES.

A radio talk by Mr. A. W. Manchester, Director of the Northeast Division of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour Tuesday, December 15, 1936, the National Broadcasting Company and a network of associated radio stations.

Thank you, Morse, for giving me a chance to talk direct to people in the northeast listening to the national Farm and Home Hour. I hope you listeners in other regions will stay with us too. We're glad to have you hear what we yankees are doing toward the national conservation plan, and some things I say will apply to your section.

Committeemen and executive officers from several New England States have just gone home after spending a few days here in Washington working on lists of soil-building practices for their States. They also worked on other details of the northeast program so that each State will have a program that exactly meets its own needs.

That meeting is so fresh in my mind that I'll have to be careful not to snow you under with too many details. To start, I want to get away from small points altogether, and say just a word about the program as it affects the whole country.

The 1937 program is very much like the 1936 program. The main objects still are to conserve soil and to make the best use of farm land. In general the methods used this year also are the same--the Government will help farmers bear the cash cost of conserving soil and making the wisest use of their land. That help will take the form of two kinds of payment--one kind for diverting acreage from soil-depleting crops to soil-conserving crops and another kind for using approved soil-building practices, such as liming, pasture improvement, and reforestation.

Maybe the two kinds of payment and the other details seem complicated. Here is one answer: The conservation of our farmland is a public problem. The whole Nation, and not just farmers alone, will gain if our soil resources are used wisely. So, since soil conservation is in the general welfare, it is proper that the cost be borne by the Nation as a whole.

If that were all of the story, the Federal Government could simply administer and pay for a national program. But the real problem is not so easy. Nearly all of the Nation's good farm land is privately owned. That's all to the good. Any real plan of soil conservation must apply to this privately owned land. Most farmers want to use their land in a way that will save and improve soil; but whether they have that desire or whether they haven't, their land is theirs. That gives us point number 1--the conservation program must be voluntary.

Here is a second factor: Wise use of land often costs money at the start. A great number of farmers who want to conserve their soil have not been able to afford to. That gives us point number 2: The government not only ought to bear part of the cost of conservation--it has to if the program is to get results.

There is a third factor, too. Nearly all of the approved ways of conserving soil and making it better eventually mean more profitable farming on the farm where they are used. That brings us to point number 3: Farmers ought to bear part of the cost of a conservation program, especially since the things they do add to the value of their farms.

Those are the reasons why the AAA conservation program is as we see it.

What I have said thus far is true for all parts of the country and for the 1936 program as well as the 1937 program. With that background in mind let's spend the rest of our time looking at the new features of the program in the northeast.

Next year, in most parts of the northeast, more attention will be paid to soil-building practices, and less attention to diverting acres from soil-depleting to soil-conserving crops. That's a good example of how the new program is fitted to the individual needs of different regions. In most of the northeast, as you know, a lot of land already is in soil-conserving crops and permanent pasture. Some farms in the northeast, of course, still have more soil-depleting crops than are best for the land. Those farms will be eligible for diversion payments just as they were last year.

But other farms which have small acreages of soil-depleting crops will not be eligible for such payments. Many of those farmers have told us that they are not interested in diversion, that they would rather have more chance to earn payments for soil-building practices. When only so much money can be spent on the program, it would be wasteful to make diversion payments in regions which do not need diversion. For those areas, real soil conservation means improving pasture and hayland and taking other steps to build up the fertility of the soil.

So next year farms which are not eligible for diversion will have larger soil-building allowances than farms which are eligible.

Just a few seconds ago I spoke of money. That reminds me of one vital point. The new program is based on the belief that 500 million dollars will be available next year for use in the whole country. That sum has been authorized by Congress, but has NOT been appropriated yet. The new program, then, is really an outline of what will be done if Congress appropriates the money.

I want to mention one more important new point in the 1937 program. Farmers in the northeast will form local associations similar to associations already formed in other parts of the country. Some time in January or early February these associations will elect committees to handle the program in their counties or communities.

The work of those committees will come right home to the pocketbook nerve of every farmer taking part in the program. The cost of local administration next year will come out of the payment checks of each local area. That means that every local area will have a real interest in how efficient its committee is. If the committee keeps its expenses down, less money will be taken out of the payment to each cooperating farmer. If a committee lets its costs run up, the farmers of that area will pay for it. Last year the cost of local administration was deducted from the sum allotted to the whole region.

There are other important new points in the program. Some kinds of pasture land will be counted in figuring a farm's soil-building allowance, special allowances will be made for fruit and vegetable land. Your county agent or local committeeman will have details of these and other provisions. A little later they will also have the facts about the soil-building practices and other special provisions for each separate State.

I urge that you talk over the new program with one of those men, or with several of them. It offers a chance to cooperate in the national effort to conserve our soil. More than that, I think it is a good business proposition on the long run basis for most farmers in the northeast. Look it over carefully and see if you don't agree with me.

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