

## WHY LAND USE?

C. H. Rapp

(Editors & guests - Lee Shields  
at in Paris)

I'm glad to join in your spring workshop to discuss one of the several topics that you will need to study and report on in 1975. As you scanned your program this morning, you may well have asked the question posed by the title of my talk, "Why Land Use?"

I hope to answer that question with some background and outlook on the shape of land-use issues, ~~and then with a look at a few slides that relate some of the reasons we all need to be concerned.~~ *we will first 25*  
*To show*

I would say first that your program gives a clue: The way in which America manages its land resource and the way in which it decides on changes in land use can influence significantly every other topic mentioned on your program...from production to trade...to energy supplies and needs...to the quality of our environment.

And land use is definitely one of the Congressional issues to *evaluated* *main report.*  
*50 Rural & State by*  
Another reason that agricultural editors, in particular, need to be concerned about land use issues is that in many decision-making processes up to now the farmer, *2* rancher *2* or forester *2* have had little *or no* voice *if any.*

Material for talk by Norman A. Berg, Associate Administrator, USDA Soil Conservation Service, at the spring workshop of the American Agricultural Editors' Association, Washington, D.C., April 8, 1975.

*managing the growth of*  
Yet ~~the~~ decisions made up to now have too often had an adverse impact on his ability to make a living or contribute to his community.

New processes for land-use decision making are being considered at every level of government. At the local level, rural people have led the way in designing some community decision-making programs ~~such as~~ *i.e.* those that conserve and help develop land resources. They have helped guide some <sup>impt</sup> community investment decisions that influence land and water use.

Many other land-use decisions, however--~~involving everything~~ from private profit-making opportunities to more efficiency in city operations--are being made without <sup>adequate</sup> rural interests <sup>input</sup> ~~input~~. More and more farmers are <sup>now watching</sup> ~~looking more closely~~ at these decisions, and <sup>increasingly</sup> ~~and~~ when vital rural interests are at stake they are demanding a voice!

<sup>Some</sup> ~~Many of the~~ new land-use programs springing up in <sup>some</sup> ~~the~~ States *recently* recognize the need for <sup>1</sup> ~~fair~~ consideration for agricultural and forestry interests, <sup>2</sup> ~~an~~ opportunity for rural people to have access to the decisionmaking process, and <sup>3</sup> ~~a~~ careful balance of public interest with private rights.

<sup>state leg.</sup> Yet some of these efforts--as well as Federal <sup>proposals</sup> ~~legislation~~ on **LAND USE** ~~the subject~~--have had their hands full trying to fend off rural criticism. The problem <sup>is to</sup> ~~has been~~ determining what the rural viewpoint is, how to allow for it, and how to enlist rural support for new *l. use* programs.

This is where the agricultural editor comes in--your publications are in a unique position to accomplish <sup>at least</sup> two things:  
*You can help*

- 3 -

1--To interpret for the rural landowner what the land-use issues are, how they may affect him, and what he can do about them; and

2--To help convey the farmer's point of view to others at the state and federal level who look to you as ~~rural spokesmen~~ *for info.*

As ~~all of~~ you know, we in the Department of Agriculture continually <sup>try to</sup> sample rural opinion on many issues including land use. ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~deal with~~ <sup>daily in</sup> organized groups that represent rural interests, including yours. USDA has field offices in every county in the United States ~~and~~

Our employees spend (full) time working with rural people, town residents, planning commissions, local governments, special-interest groups, and others. We get some feedback, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> we'd welcome your own assessment to make sure we're on the right track.

What we hear from <sup>(the field people)</sup> out in the country is that land use is a hot issue, *- Surface mine touches miners* problem...that current methods of making decisions that impact on land <sup>actively</sup> are not adequate...that drawing more "final plans" or "comprehensive

plans" or "master plans" is not the total answer...and that any new program for guiding land use must include all interests. *- or it will fail*

*I think* > Rural people <sup>to</sup> want control of local issues, <sup>may</sup> but see the need for a limited State role <sup>as a catalyst</sup> on the larger questions that extend beyond local boundaries. They do not want the Federal government telling them what they should and shouldn't do. They <sup>hope-expect</sup> with the "Feds" would cooperate and consult with them before making major public works decisions that can swamp local plans and objectives.

- 4 -

These <sup>views</sup> may be considered in some quarters as narrow, parochial, rural views, but ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> don't think ~~they are~~ <sup>so</sup>. I ~~think~~ <sup>think</sup> they are very realistic. Rural people have a definite contribution to make in the land-use planning process, ~~and we~~ <sup>and we</sup> strongly urge that they participate in it. I urge you to help <sup>show</sup> them ~~how~~ <sup>how</sup> and ~~why~~ <sup>why</sup> to participate.

Farmers, ranchers, and foresters as individuals have been planning the use and management of <sup>their</sup> land for a long time. They know that planning is a vital part of production--that a good agriculturist doesn't bend with every breeze. They have planned cropping systems, conservation systems, <sup>LAND & WATER</sup> and management systems of all sorts.

They understand, too, that the most useful plan is also the most flexible--the one that gives them realistic options and that allows them to react to new conditions...make new decisions...seize new opportunities...avoid new hazards. They are skeptical of any proposal that fixes a fancy new "plan" for the future and never departs from it.

Furthermore, rural people have <sup>(long)</sup> thrived on hard work and self-reliance. They ~~have learned how to~~ make daily decisions in a high-risk way of life. ~~And~~ they don't want to abandon this initiative to some government agency.

Much past land-use planning <sup>has</sup> originated in the <sup>big</sup> cities, ~~but~~ <sup>many</sup> rural folk have had a chance to observe these efforts firsthand--one farmer in every six lives in a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.

He has seen the local planning process result in decisions that have affected the value of his land--and sometimes <sup>hurt</sup> his ability to stay in business.

Many rural interests <sup>to know</sup> ~~today~~ <sup>ed</sup> vigorously oppose national land use bills on the basis that they spell Federal "plans" for private land.

Few recognize that the <sup>current</sup> proposals do not encourage additional "planning" as much as they encourage new land management programs <sup>of processes</sup> specifically designed to include landowners, users, and the general public in the <sup>h.u.</sup> ~~decision-making~~ <sup>fact</sup> process. Current proposals do not <sup>seek to</sup> establish Federal land controls over private land. Instead they <sup>(by &)</sup> encourage State and local arrangements to make land use decisions and commit the Federal Government to respect those decisions when Federal investments affecting land use are being considered. With the mixed but loud <sup>cries</sup> ~~attitudes~~ we've been hearing from rural constituents, it would ~~have been~~ easy for the Department of Agriculture and for rural organizations to oppose any Federal land use bill. But the USDA is concerned with the long-term well being of American agriculture and forestry, so this course <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ not viable. It seems reasonably certain that some type of national land use legislation will be enacted...if not this year, then a little later.

Federal interest in land use is substantial <sup>As C.H.R. Peterson</sup>

<sup>Said,</sup> --The Federal Government is the largest land holder--

--Many Federal programs on energy, transportation, public works, housing programs, and other needs have varying impacts on how private land is used.

--Federal programs are frequently used to bail local people out of earlier bad land use decisions when floods or earthquakes occur, homes slide downhill, or other problem arise.

--There is a strong need for state and local <sup>Butz</sup> programs to help in meeting important national objectives in energy development and food and fiber production.

~~In addition,~~ <sup>The</sup> Department of Agriculture has some very specific concerns--~~many of them~~ <sup>primarily</sup> focused on how well new legislation would meet rural needs. Secretary Butz recently voiced this concern in a letter to the White House, with a copy to the Secretary of the Interior.

He noted that the "Department is generally in favor of the concept of Federal incentives to improve state and local land management and decision-making."

At the same time, he pointed to the lack of a Federal <sup>inst.</sup> organization to handle land use problems on a national level. Such a Federal structure--to prescribe effectively the proper role of several key agencies <sup>incl. USOA</sup> now having significant land-use programs and actions. It should not be difficult to develop. <sup>but we haven't yet?</sup>

Last month I joined Interior Department spokesmen and Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Robert Long in testifying before the House Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. <sup>chr. by Mr. Udall</sup>

The President had postponed support for national land use legislation:

--because he had pledged to avoid new programs requiring additional Federal spending, except for energy;

--because present programs involving Coastal Zone Management and HUD grants need further analysis and trial; and

--because several states are adopting their own laws. ~~So~~ in our presentations before the Subcommittee, we recommended against enactment of HR 3510, the "Land Use and Resource Conservation Act of 1975," at this time.

Senate hearings have been scheduled for ~~late~~ April <sup>22</sup> on two related bills--Mr. Jackson's S. 984 on land use, and S. 619 that represents part of the Administration's overall proposal on energy independence.

Although the Administration does not want a land use bill at this time, it does want passage of a bill to aid in planning sites for energy facilities. Senator Jackson has included in his land-use bill a 17-page section on energy siting--hence the discussion of both S. 984 and S. 619 at the same hearings.

While these deliberations ~~are going on~~, several programs ~~that~~ are ~~already in motion~~ <sup>now</sup> are providing (good) testing grounds for land-use theories and concepts. An important one is the Coastal Zone Management Program administered by the Department of Commerce. It provides grants to States to develop <sup>92</sup> management programs for ~~that~~ narrow strip of land <sup>water</sup> along both seacoasts, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Great Lakes.



- 8 -

In or near that narrow strip lives about half of the total population of the United States. The programs developed in the Coastal Zone <sup>could</sup> ~~will~~ be models for statewide land use programs as they emerge.

All of the land-use efforts underway in going programs and contained in new legislation will affect the people you write for. ~~So I think~~ It is vital for you to acquire an in-depth understanding of land-use issues and of the kinds of help available to people.

It is vital for you to communicate an in-depth understanding to your readers. It is vital for all of you to keep up to date-- and that is not easy in the fast-moving world of land use today.

It is vital for you to help us in Washington understand what the real rural viewpoint is. Are rural Americans unalterably opposed to new Federal programs or new State programs in land use? Are they supportive under certain conditions? What are the conditions? Are they satisfied with present efforts of government agencies to provide natural resource data and technical assistance in land management? How can we improve in ways other than the standard solution of great new inputs of money and manpower?

I'd like to leave one suggestion with you for getting up to date on land use, besides reading national publications and monitoring hearings. About 18 months ago Secretary Butz issued a major policy statement, Secretary's Memorandum 1827.



- 9 -

It outlined several ways in which USDA will work to improve its performance in the land-use arena, from better aid to rural individuals to better coordination with other Federal Departments.

( Rather than send Memorandum 1827 through the mail to be filed under "L" for land use or to be used as a fan in southern USDA offices, <sup>last year</sup> we held five regional workshops for key USDA people to dissect the memo and make suggestions for implementing USDA policies across the country. One suggestion that already has been adopted by most states is to convene <sup>USDA</sup> a group at the statewide level to coordinate the efforts of the half-dozen or more USDA agencies involved directly in land-use concerns. That group in most cases is <sup>allied w/</sup> the State USDA Rural Development Committee-- another indication that rural people have a lot at stake in land use. I would suggest that ~~you~~ agricultural editors <sup>contact</sup> ~~get to know~~ your state's rural development committee and ~~begin to~~ help each other keep up to date.

The committee isn't likely to be listed in the telephone directory. The chairman may be the head of any of the six lead agencies-- in <sup>some</sup> ~~many~~ States, it is the Soil Conservation Service State Conservationist or

They can get you started.

Extension, or FIDA

The rural development committee meetings or briefings may well suggest story ideas to you, and they'll be interested in your ideas on the "rural viewpoint." At the same time, you can help give USDA's efforts in rural development and land use some additional exposure to the public.

- Last 12 slides.

- 10 -

The result can be more satisfying communities for all of us to live in, communities that have the kind of intelligence and the kind of flexibility to stay ahead of dilemmas in land use or environmental quality or a dozen other concerns.

I hope you will take these concerns home with you and digest them for all the people in rural and urban America who look to you for practical, effective editorial judgment.

Thank you.

# # # # #

4/2/75

178.11

## LAND USE ISSUES

1. Land use is a big question mark today, in publications...news media...meeting halls and legislatures.
2. Sometimes we hear about it because <sup>many</sup> different land uses <sup>are</sup> ~~get~~ close together and cause conflicts or questions.
3. Sometimes our eye tells us there must be better ways to manage land.
4. Sometimes our pocketbook tells us that resources aren't being taken care of properly.
5. Across America, land-use discussions and plans and arguments are shaping up. What is the situation? What are the facts that we know? What are the issues?
6. Let's talk about ownership. Of America's land resource, 58 percent is owned by individual farmers, ranchers, homeowners, and industry.
7. From this land comes most of the food, fiber, and (timber) that we consume and export.
8. One third of the private land is in forest.
9. Twenty-seven percent is grassland pasture and range.
10. And about one-fifth is cropland.
11. Despite an almost 200-percent increase in U.S. population since 1900, these proportions in land use have changed very little.
12. The reasons include agriculture-related technology, government and university programs, and private enterprise.
13. Some of the changes that have come about have to do with crop production per acre...
14. Increases in cropland harvested over the last few years...
15. And land uses in standard metropolitan statistical areas...Notice that even in SMSA's, crops, pasture, and woods still occupy three-fourths of the land. So are there distinct rural and urban viewpoints on land use? Not really.

16. The second largest segment of land--34 percent--is under Federal management including forests and parks, wildlife refuges, and just plain public domain. It should set a good example of proper *land* use and protection.
17. Another 8 percent of land in the U.S. is owned by State and local government or by American Indians.
18. For the most part, America's land is sparsely populated. Over the last 20 years, 1,500 counties lost population.
19. Outmigrations from the farm population have affected land use in rural and urban areas.
20. Seventy percent of our people live in the metropolitan areas that cover 3 percent or less of our land. This includes the land for superhighways, railroads, and airports.
21. The way in which Americans use land has been, for the most part, good! Farmers and ranchers particularly have been doing land use planning for years while others are just now talking and arguing about land use planning for the first time.
22. But some people do still use land in ways that bring crop failure and land damage, that are costly to America economically and esthetically.
23. We use some land in ways that cause significant pollution problems that just aren't going to be tolerated in the years ahead.
24. We tear up land for buildings and pavement without considering what storm water may do during or after construction.
25. We scatter communities about until eventually they squeeze the farmer out of business.
26. Obviously, people want sensible land management for a high-quality environment--starting with an assurance of continued high-quality food supplies, and on through needs like recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and historical areas.
27. They want communities they can take pride in. They can have all these things if a process for land-use planning and policy is established that seeks out and uses natural resource inputs, economic and social factors, coordination with Federal programs, and exchange of information and ideas with the public.
28. A good land use process would help answer the question of whether a land-use change should be a private, free-market decision or should have some kind of overview at the local, regional or State level to protect the public interest.

29. The private landowner will need continual reminding that he has duties as well as rights in the matter of using and caring for his land and water resources.
30. Above all, we feel that land use planning begins and ends with people. USDA has always been a people's department as well as a land department.
31. Secretary Butz <sup>has said</sup> has issued a major policy statement on USDA's interest and objectives in the land-use field. We are implementing it across the country.
32. As the amount of land Americans have per person continues to shrink--from 22 acres in 1920 to 11 acres today to perhaps 7 acres in the year 2000--we will all have reason for concern about valid land-use decisions.
33. We will have reason for helping resolve differences, get decisions made, plans implemented, resources protected, and create the kind of America we want tomorrow in rural and urban areas.
34. The time to take a strong role in forming land use policy and aiding land-use choices--voluntary or otherwise--is right now.
35. The time for reading and acting is right now.
36. We don't want land-use policies to be shaped at the same speed as this Idaho highway.
37. The Soil Conservation Service will do all it can--but a strong effort from many others will be needed...including farm editors.

END SLIDE RUN

LIGHTS ON