

Fashion of Plumpness Would End Surpluses—

Over-Productive Capacity Named By Deering as Major Farm Problem

"Agriculture isn't what it used to be; it never was and never will be."

This was the opening remark made by Ferdie Deering, editor of the Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman, in a Wednesday speech to the Ada Rotary Club. Deering, a former Adan, chose as his theme "The Revolution in Agriculture" and elaborated on the impact of the changes on rural and urban relations.

The Oklahoma City editor produced charts, filled with facts and figures, to illustrate the drastic alterations which have taken place in U. S. farming in the past 20 years.

"There has been a sharp drop in the number of commercial farms and a corresponding rise in the amount of acreage per farm," he disclosed. "Whereas farm population has decreased rapidly, investment in farms has increased greatly and output per worker and agricultural price have followed an upward trend for many years."

"There have been major revolutions in all areas of America society, not only on the farm," he declared. "The farmer is now, of the whole, operating in the red. After a steady increase and peaking during the Korean conflict, the trend has been downward. Farm spending is now much more similar to urban expenditures. It takes much more to run a farm profitably."

Foods Cheaper Than in '33

At this point, he paused to reflect on recent charges that "agriculture is sick."

"Agriculture is not sick," he commented. "The housewife in America can now buy a great deal more food per dollar earned by the family breadwinner. Food is cheaper today than it was in 1933 because factory wages are much higher and it takes less labor to earn a proportionate amount of money with which to purchase food."

Deering acknowledged that problems do exist in agriculture today, but he insisted: "Our problem will not be solved in Washington. The day of 'keep everybody on the farm' who wants to stay on the farm' had been a dismal failure because it was founded on the artificial basis of government supporting an unprofitable business."

He pointed to the fact that farms in Pontotoc County have decreased from a figure of 2,500 in 1937 to the present 1,608; of them, only 500 produce 90 per cent of the county's farm production. He illustrated how the general trend is away from small subsistence farms, although more people are engaged directly or indirectly in agricultural production today than ever before.

Bound to Have Surplus

"It is self-evident that we can raise more than we can eat," he noted. "Thus, we are bound to have a surplus. Many ideas have been put forth on how we can control surpluses."

He added facetiously: "Recently, I spoke to Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Benson and gave my idea on what to do about surpluses. He commented that he had received thousands of solutions, but never one such as mine. I merely proposed that everybody should eat four meals a day, instead of three. Doctors should show people how to become plump instead of encouraging dieting."

"I believe the answer is to make it fashionable to be plump rather than slim. It would probably even rejuvenate the lagging cotton production if everyone were forced to buy larger sized clothing," he chuckled.

Deering ended his remarks by urging urban people to adjust

their thinking to the new concept of a dynamic agriculture and the multitudinous problems facing the farm population.

"Agriculture is one industry we cannot exist without," he

concluded. "Our problems must be solved by men on the farm who have the skill, know-how, and farsightedness to recognize their problems and cope with them on a business-like basis."