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Agriculture is not always viewed in its proper perspective as a creator of employment, even when the food and fiber chain is recognized as a fundamental industry because everybody must eat.

Oklahoma produces close to \$2 billion worth of farm products annually. Wholesale value of those commodities could just about be doubled by processing them into consumer items. As a matter of fact, that is being done---but the jobs are in other states.

Most of Oklahoma's cattle production, our biggest source of agricultural income, is slaughtered in other states and a great deal of meat consumed here is imported for lack of a "breaking plant" and other shortcomings in our marketing system.

Most of our wheat, ~~second~~ largest money crop, moves into channels of trade for export, ~~but which provide~~ for Oklahomans but not nearly as many as might result if we processed a substantial part of our grain into consumer cereal products.
/ which provides some jobs /

The same situation prevails for agricultural production all the way down the line, and only petroleum rivals farming as a producer of raw materials for new wealth in this state.

In a speech at Wagoner just before he returned to Washington, Sen. Henry Bellmon, R-OK, pointed out that many problems of cities are ~~tax~~ traceable to migration of people from farms over the past

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40 years. Urban areas could not absorb and employ them in suitable jobs as rapidly as they came and that meant trouble.

The trend from farm to city has levelled off and many city people are moving back to the country, creating a new set of problems. Bellmon noted that the federal Rural Development Program has never been fully funded, adding that if it ever is, it could provide employment much needed in rural areas and small towns.

Oklahoma doesn't have to wait on Uncle Sam to collect more taxes and send part of the money back to us in order to stimulate agri-business. We could and should start our own businesses to process, package and market agricultural products for ~~consumers~~ / consumers. /

A recent column along this line brought forth a number of suggestions on how our state could capitalize on its agri-business opportunities. More are needed. If you have suggestions, address them to the writer, or to Monte Reese, secretary of the Agri-Business Council of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, One Santa Fe Plaza, Oklahoma City, OK, 73102.

For example, Frank Swan, vice chairman of City National Bank and Trust Co., wrote to suggest that central Oklahoma would be a good location for a farm equipment manufacturer and he mentioned a firm which might be a prime prospect.

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"Oklahoma City seems to be a good location for some type of canning or processing plant, too," Swan said. "There could be lots of potentialities for that type of work. A canning industry would require a certain amount of truck gardening, for example, to produce green beans, vegetables, fruits and other raw products for processing."

From other sources have come suggestions for expanded hog production, including feeder pig farms and more processing plants.

An oilseed ~~extractin~~ refining and processing plant could / extraction, / utilize the state's peanuts, cottonseed and soybeans, all of which are now shipped out of state to extract the oil.

Supporters of a hide tanning and leather products industry in the state have been encouraged by recent developments, ~~whil~~which will be reported in detail later. Because this industry has largely lost out nationally to foreign trade, a new opportunity is open for Oklahoma, if new methods, facilities and procedures can be ~~developed~~ developed. Millions of cow hides are available annually in Oklahoma and ~~adjan~~ adjacent states, but we export the shoes we wear. << homa and ~~adjan~~ adjacent states, but we import the shoes we wear.

Oklahoma State University's agricultural division and the University of Oklahoma's Center for Economic and Management Re-

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search have offered assistance in coordinating procedures of
production, processing and marketing, and others will help.

Many families have moved from crowded cities to rural areas
to provide their children with ~~genuine~~ growing experiences and a
wholesome atmosphere. However, these same children will be back
on city streets as soon as they are old enough to leave home
unless industries are built in small towns over the state to
offer them jobs as they reach employment age.

Neither agriculture nor any other industry is likely to be-
come less mechanized than it is today. Because of wage, safety
and other regulations, the trend is apt to be toward ~~increased~~
mechanization and automation, rather than less.

For these reasons and others, an intensive statewide campaign
would be in order to expand our agri-business industries. Unless
this is accomplished, employment and population may decline, and
when that happens, business and individual incomes will suffer.

Everybody depends upon agriculture for food, but farming in
Oklahoma has economic significance far beyond what we eat. If we
can get in ~~on~~ our share of the processing operations for what
we grow, our potential for progress is tremendous!

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