

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 14, 1975

Office of the Vice President
(Kansas City, Missouri)

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA
MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

(AT 11:10 A.M. CST)

Thank you very much, Alfa. I have got to say when you and I flew to London on that little ceremonial trip, I had no idea of the strength and vitality and the tremendous warmth of the organization that you represented. America is proud that you were there and they are proud of the organization you represent, and I am proud to be here standing in front of this group.

(Applause.)

I would just like to say you can be proud of your President and the way he handled himself in London. He did a fabulous job and it was a great occasion. I think this renewed some of the old ties which we have had for so many years with the British people.

To all the officers of FFA, to the delegates, to the members, to the members of the families of the members, to the advisors, the international guests, and to all of you friends, I would just like to say what a thrill it is for me to be here, what an exciting experience.

I have to say that my roots go back to a farm family of America. My grandfather was born on the very poor farm of a very poor family in the southern tier of New York State.

Of course, we don't have the kind of land there that you do; mostly stones. But we do our best. So that I have a tremendous feel and a tremendous sense of identification and association with this great organization and with this wonderful group of young people gathered here, the Future Farmers of America.

I am happy you invited me to be here because a chance to talk to the Future Farmers of America is a chance to talk to the future leaders of America.

(Applause.)

Fifty of your alumni in the Congress and five more serving as State Governors amply prove that point.

We Americans are a lucky people. We live in the greatest country in the world. One big reason why is the fact that we are also the greatest agricultural nation in the world.

(Applause.)

The basic American traits that led you young people to choose farming and related careers are the same

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traits that made America great. This country was built on the initiative of the individual, individual free citizens, and nobody shows more individual initiative than the people on the farms.

This country was built on free enterprise, and there is no purer form of free enterprise than a family that stakes its livelihood on the land.

This country's fantastic growth resulted from people who weren't afraid to take risks, and there is no business where you take greater risks, risks against the unpredictable elements, against drought, against rain, against blight, and against frost, and huge risks of investment capital, to make American farms the most productive farms in the world.

This country was built by people with ideas and imagination and vision, by people who achieved everything from the cotton gin to landing on the moon. And nowhere do we see more of that ingenuity at work than on the American farms.

(Applause.)

But most importantly, this country was lifted to greatness by people who love it, and no one loves the American soil more than the people who till it.

Today we see young people searching for meaning in their lives in all sorts of ways, both good and bad. I cannot think of a better place to learn how to be a good American and how to be a useful human being than right here through the Future Farmers of America.

(Applause.)

You are learning more than how to be successful farmers. You are learning how to live successfully and usefully.

Only five out of every 100 Americans live and work on the farm today. Yet, you of that vital and hard-working five percent are the ones that feed all of the rest of us. And you still produce enough to feed a good share of the rest of the world as well.

As a Nation, we depend heavily on agriculture to compete successfully in the world economy. In the last few years, the American farmer has responded to the world demand for food with fantastic increases in production. In fact, agricultural products have become our major export, reaching close to \$20 billion a year.

In the face of our dangerously large expenditures for imported oil, these food exports have spelled the difference between a U.S. trade deficit, which would have weakened the American dollar, and a U.S. trade surplus, which strengthens our dollar.

So we are counting on our future farmers to play an important role in keeping our Nation's economy strong,

both at home and abroad.

(Applause.)

We are counting on you to continue the great American humanitarian tradition. There has rarely been a famine or any other disaster where American generosity has not helped relieve human suffering. Of all the food provided to hungry nations between 1965 and 1972, the United States provided 84 percent of all of that food.

This is the finest expression of two typical American traits, practical success in what we set out to achieve and deep generosity towards others in sharing what we have.

Clearly American agriculture has been critical in building our economy and beneficial to the people of the world.

What does the future hold? This much we can be sure of: You have certainly chosen a growth industry. The world's population is growing so fast that it is likely to reach 6 to 8 billion by the next century, just 25 years away.

As a result of this steep rise in population, as a result of rising incomes -- which permit people to eat better -- the demand for food grains alone is expected to double by the year 2000.

Right now something like 500 million people in this world -- one out of every 10 -- doesn't get enough food or doesn't eat the right food. It is up to you to continue the part that agriculture plays to keep our people healthy and strong in America. It is up to you to continue that part that agriculture plays to keep our economy strong in the world. And it is up to you to help meet that human challenge to feed a hungry world by helping to spread our unmatched agricultural "know-how" to the poorer nations.

The Chinese have an ancient proverb: "Give a man a fish and he can feed himself for one day. Teach him how to fish and he can feed himself for the rest of his life."

You can apply these lessons to world food production. You clearly have important work ahead of you. Your communities need you. Your country needs you. And, frankly, the world needs you.

(Applause.)

Anyone who has the privilege of walking into this great hall and seeing this wonderful fathering cannot have anything but absolute confidence that you are equal to that test in meeting the needs at home in your communities, meeting the needs of our country, and meeting the needs the world has for you.

You are descendants of people who cleared the prairies of the Midwest and made them the bread basket of the world. I think such people will be able to help

solve the world's growing food problems and demands. You are descendants of pioneers who settled deserts, who irrigated these lands with water and the sweat of their brow, and turned some of them into the most fertile valleys in the world.

I think the descendants of such people will be able to teach others in poor nations to make their deserts flourish, too. The first crop that most of your ancestors harvested in the East, as I made reference earlier, were stones. That is why you see those stone walls along the eastern farm fields. I think such people will have the brains and the discipline to conquer a problem like the energy crisis.

But I have to say parenthetically that I was in Texas at a meeting of the Domestic Council on the subject of a review for the President on domestic policies and programs relating to his State of the Union message next year.

The distinguished Governor of Texas, speaking of the energy problem, said that had we responded to the attack on Pearl Harbor as we have so far responded to the energy problem, we would all be speaking Japanese in the United States now, which was a pretty dramatic way of telling us that we haven't done too much yet.

It is about time we use that American ingenuity and American drive and American faith and American confidence to meet the problems that we face, and it is the heart not only of an industrial society but it is the heart of agriculture. Without energy, you can't continue your job. Your costs go up.

This country cannot enjoy the kind of growth which is essential for our country if we are going to have products for our people, if we are going to be able to produce the goods and services for our people, if we are going to be able to enjoy the kind of life that this country has enjoyed, and if we are going to be able to meet our responsibilities in the world.

So I take the liberty of feeling the confidence and the drive and the enthusiasm that exists in this room here, and that is applied to the Future Farmers of America, and say let's apply what you have and your spirit to the future problems of America, including the solution of the energy problem.

(Applause.)

Let's face it, ladies and gentlemen, we not only have the human resources, but the Good Lord has blessed us with the natural resources in this great Nation and, therefore, all we have to do is use that same kind of imagination and ingenuity which you used to create this country's extraordinary productive capacity in agriculture.

You are the heirs of men and women who drained swamps all the way from the Carolinas to Florida and Louisiana. You turned these swamplands into gardens. I think a generation descended from such people will

maintain America as the most productive country in the world. And while you are at it, you will be making it a better world, too.

(Applause.)

There is a great deal that we can't predict about the future, but this much I am willing to bet. When the next century rolls around, and it is not too long from now, American agriculture will continue to be one of the most powerful and one of the most beneficial forces on earth. You will be its leaders.

We all love this country. We are all proud of America and proud to be Americans. I cannot think of any better news for America than the choice that you have made for your careers.

You have chosen the land. As long as we have young people who aspire to be future farmers of America, then the future of America is in safe hands.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

END (AT 11:28 A.M. CST)