

The original documents are located in Box 36, “7/22/76 - Remarks at a Gathering of Future Farmers of America” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN. . . .

FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA, JULY 22, 1976

TALKING POINTS

SECRETARY BUTZ, PRESIDENT BOBBY, STATE AND

NATIONAL OFFICERS OF THE FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA:

IT IS A PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU TO THE WHITE HOUSE

ONCE AGAIN.

GENERAL MOTORS HAS DONE A FINE JOB IN MAKING IT
POSSIBLE FOR ALL OF YOU TO COME TO WASHINGTON TO GET A
FIRST-HAND INSIGHT INTO THE WORKINGS OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

I ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR WASHINGTON
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, AND I AM GLAD TO SEE FUTURE FARMERS
FROM GREAT BRITAIN, NEW ZEALAND AND DENMARK JOINING
YOU TODAY.

AS WE RECALL THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY DURING THIS
BICENTENNIAL YEAR, WE ARE REMINDED OF THE VERY IMPORTANT
ROLE WHICH FARMERS -- AND YOUNG PEOPLE -- HAVE PLAYED
IN THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF AMERICA.

OUR FARMS HAVE PRODUCED NOT ONLY THE MOST ABUNDANT
SUPPLIES OF FOOD AND FIBER THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN,
BUT ALSO SOME OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING LEADERS IN OUR
NATION'S HISTORY.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND HARRY TRUMAN,

AMONG MANY OTHERS, WERE SONS OF THE SOIL.

AMERICA'S DEEP ROOTS IN AGRICULTURE NEED CONSTANT
NOURISHMENT, AND THIS MEANS WE MUST ENSURE THAT THE FAMILY
FARMS OF AMERICA WILL CONTINUE TO BE A LIVING, THRIVING
AND VALUABLE TRADITION IN THIS COUNTRY.

FOR TOO LONG, THAT TRADITION HAS BEEN IN DANGER.

FOR A GENERATION, MORE AND MORE YOUNG PEOPLE MOVED AWAY

FROM THE FARMS AND FROM RURAL AMERICA, AND MIGRATED

TO THE CITIES.

THERE WERE MANY REASONS FOR THIS MASS MIGRATION,
BUT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT HAS BEEN A DEFICIENCY IN OUR
GOVERNMENT TAX STRUCTURE WHICH ACTUALLY DISCOURAGES
PASSING FARM PROPERTY FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT.

AFTER WORLD WAR I, THERE WAS A POPULAR SONG CALLED,

"HOW YA GONNA KEEP EM DOWN ON THE FARM, AFTER THEY'VE SEEN

PAREE."

TODAY THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IS KEEPING PEOPLE

ON THE FARM AFTER THEY'VE SEEN THE ESTATE TAXES THEY HAVE TO PAY.

I HAVE PROPOSED THAT THE CONGRESS TAKE THREE IMPORTANT
STEPS TO IMPROVE THIS SITUATION:

FIRST, TO RAISE THE ESTATE-TAX EXEMPTION FROM ITS 1942
LEVEL OF 60,000 DOLLARS, TO A MORE REALISTIC 150,000 DOLLARS;

SECOND, TO EXTEND THE PAY-BACK PERIOD AT LOW INTEREST RATES OVER 25 YEARS;

AND THIRD, TO EXEMPT FROM TAXATION THE TRANSFER OF PROPERTY BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE.

THE ENACTMENT OF THESE PROVISIONS WOULD GO A VERY
LONG WAY TOWARD ENSURING THAT FAMILY FARMS WILL STAY IN THE
FAMILY, THAT THE FARMS YOUR MOTHERS AND FATHERS AND
GRANDPARENTS WORKED SO HARD TO DEVELOP WILL NOT HAVE TO BE
SACRIFICED JUST TO PAY THE TAX COLLECTOR.

THE AMERICAN FARMER IS TOO IMPORTANT TO THIS COUNTRY,
AND TO THE WORLD, FOR US TO CONTINUE TO SHORTCHANGE HIM
AND IN EFFECT, DRIVE HIM OFF HIS LAND THROUGH OFFICIAL TAX
POLICIES.

THESE POLICIES MUST BE CHANGED, AND THE AMERICAN

FAMILY FARM MUST BE PRESERVED.

PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON ONCE OFFERED THIS
DEFINITION OF AMERICA AND THE GREAT PROMISE IT HELD FOR MEN
AND WOMEN EVERYWHERE: "AMERICA," HE SAID, "IS THE HARVEST
SLEEPING IN THE UNPLOWED GROUND."

AS THE FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA, YOU WILL REAP THAT
HARVEST, IN A LITERAL AS WELL AS SYMBOLIC SENSE.

THE THIRD CENTURY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE IS OPENING
ON A NOTE OF CONFIDENCE AND HOPE.

YOU HAVE A FERTILE FIELD IN WHICH TO PLANT THE SEEDS OF HOPE
AND HARMONY, PEACE AND PLENTY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
OF AMERICANS.

TO BRING IN THAT HARVEST, AS ANY OTHER, HARD WORK
IS REQUIRED.

YOU ARE NO STRANGERS TO HARD WORK, AND I HAVE EVERY
CONFIDENCE YOU WILL GET THE JOB DONE AND MAKE AMERICA GROW
AND PROSPER IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

END OF TEXT