

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

March 15-March 21, 1992



America Honors People Who Put Food on Our Tables



***"Let the farmer forevermore be honored in his calling,
for they who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God."***

— Thomas Jefferson

***"The best fertilizer for a piece of land is the footprints of its owner."
– Lyndon B. Johnson, made during an inspection of his Texas ranch, 1963***



The more than 20 million men and women who provide the food and fiber Americans use every day will be honored during National Agriculture Week — March 15-21, and National Agriculture Day — March 20.

"Without a national observance, it is too easy to forget the importance of the American food and agriculture industry in our daily lives," says Bud Porter, chairman of the nationwide celebration. "We forget that our food and agriculture industry puts food on our table, clothes on our back and shelter over our heads each day."

National Agriculture Day, National Agriculture Week and National Women in Agriculture Day — March 19 — coincide with the beginning of spring when thousands of farmers across the country are preparing their fields for planting. The annual observance is designed to direct attention to the important contributions made by the food and agriculture industry.

"For many Americans raised in the city, agriculture is as mysterious as a college level course in trigonometry," says Porter. "As a result, we have to help the public understand the challenges the industry faces in continuing to meet our food and fiber needs. We also must make them aware of the important stake they have in the future of our food and agriculture industry."

For example, Porter says the food and agriculture industry represents nearly 16 percent of the Gross National Product and an estimated 21 million jobs (or 17 percent of the total national work force). Yet approximately 90 percent of the industry's jobs are off the farm. According to Porter, this means Americans don't have to live on a farm to have their livelihood depend on agriculture.

In fact, he says a large segment of the population depends on agriculture but have never been on a farm: from the assembly worker building tractors to the people in food processing and retailing, railroads and other transportation.

"Not many people are really aware of the connection — they see themselves as totally removed from agriculture, not realizing that their economic well-being as well as their daily sustenance is interwoven with our food and agriculture industry."

Porter is director of sales branches at Deere & Company, a farm implement manufacturer based in Moline, Ill. He is a board member of the Agriculture Council of America (ACA), the national coordinator of National Agriculture Day.

To mark National Agriculture Day and National Agriculture Week 1992, the fifth of a five-year series of original oil paintings has been created. "Sharing Our Finest" is the title of this year's painting, which depicts a farmers' market. Posters of the painting have been produced and distributed by a number of agricultural groups and state departments of agriculture across the country.

In addition, countless number of activities will be held in conjunction with National Agriculture Week and National Agriculture Day, including shopping mall displays, agricultural teach-ins or educational programs, and special breakfasts and luncheons recognizing the industry.

In Lincoln, Neb., for example, a special breakfast featuring state agricultural products will be held. Guests will be served

food ranging from Corn Husker beef jerky to soy-fried donuts. And the York, Pa., Area Chamber of Commerce will mark the occasion by sponsoring an Ag Day Exchange in which farmers and ranchers exchange jobs for a day with other area business people and vice versa. What's more, all state departments of agriculture will generate official proclamations of Agriculture Day from the nation's governors.

In Washington, D.C., a national proclamation will be signed by the President to show support for the food and agriculture industry. In addition, a reception will be held on Capitol Hill to remind legislators of the important role the industry plays in their state and national economies.

ACA is a broad-based membership organization of farmers and ranchers, local, state and national commodity organizations, agribusinesses, and other interests that work together to promote and build support for the food and agriculture industry.

For more information on National Agriculture Day and National Agriculture Week, contact ACA at 1250 "Eye" Street, N.W., Suite 601, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 682-9200.