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Question1: I am a young farmer(30 years old) from Louisiana. I farm rice. As of this year I can no longer afford to farm because my inputs have tripled and my selling price has reached 1960 era prices. Since we have been supplying this nation with food to eat, I would benefit from tax breaks or tax exemption on fuel, fertilizer,and equipment.

Incentives for me to stay in farming would be guaranteeing I could make a profit each year by letting me know exactly what price I would get for my commodity. Most employees of any business know what they will make so they can make sound decisions on purchases but we cannot because of fluctuating prices.

Question2: Farmers here need to be able to compete with countries that have 2 dollar per hour labor and no chemical or pesticide restrictions on growing their crops. That means we must be subsidized enough to make it a level playing field. Our machinery, chemicals,fuel,and labor are much higher than many of our competitors so we need discounts on our machinery,chemicals,and fuel.We must have some type of barriers to defend us if we are to be competitive.

Question3: If a farmer is considered someone who grows food for someone else, we must be the only one that is subsidized. Large timber companies are subsidized by the government and farmers are in direct competition with these people in this way. Many of these companies have farmland, and if a tenant farmer can't pay his rent because of low prices he is kicked off and trees are planted on the government payment acres. The timber company will get paid with or without the farmer-so he is expendable. As long as the farmer is in direct competition with these situations he will eventually lose out. Farmers need to be subsidized to greater extent because they usually don't have the staying power of large timber or investment companies.

Question4: Incentive programs like EQUIP have helped me. I like the idea of government help to improve farming. Especially when farmers cannot afford to do it on their own.

Question5: If the farmers are taken care of and not driven out of business, the rural stores and ag equipment dealers will flourish. When farmers quit buying things, rural areas start to suffer. I think just keeping the ag sector strong is enough to keep small communities afloat.

Question6: Ag marketing would benefit if the money is put in the right hands. Many times farmers cannot experiment with new activities because the money doesn't make it to the farmer. Examples would be-landowners see that farmers will get more help from the government so they up the rent on the farmer-rice mills watch the Loan Deficiency Payments(LDP)so that when the Ldp goes up, they drop their prices by that amount so we get no benefit from it. The government has good intentions but the money doesn't make it to the farmers.