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Question1:

Question2:

Question3: For one thing, the original farm subsidies suggested capped subsidies so that the very large agri-businesses would not receive as much in the way of funds. This would have sort of levelled the farming field for the smaller farmers.

I now live in Washington State, but grew up in Illinois where many of my relatives still live and farm. Even now, the "smaller" farms are much larger than they were when I was a child about 40 - 50 years ago. These sizes are necessary just to be able to afford the necessary farming equipment.

I know my brother received a notice that he could pick up his small subsidy. When he travelled to Carthage, IL to collect the funds, he was told they had run out. How could this have happened? And at a time that the big wheat farming businesses were picking up hundreds of thousands of dollars?

Question4: First, it seems to me that the WTO is largely a bunch of whooey!!! A group of non-elected, non-representative people should not have such control as these people do. Most of their "rulings" only do damage to many people involved.

Having said that, subsidies for cutting back on the fertilizer types ending up in the Mississippi (to mention a river I am very familiar with), and ending up in the toxic plume at the mouth of the river should be implemented. I even know some farmers who are stuck with 50-year old farming methods which means heavy erosion in wet seasons. Such archaic farming practices should be heavily discouraged.

Here in Washington and in Oregon, commercial growth of trees is encouraged via tax reductions. Is this done in the midwest? Wisconsin is a good state for this sort of practice due to its fairly poor farmland.

"Truck" farming of specialized crops could be encouraged, both by providing information on profitable crops and, again, tax benefits.

Some former Safeway employees in California grow spices and other "specialized" crops in green houses, selling them under contract to the supermarket. This can be very profitable, but individual farmers may not be aware of this possibility, and also may not have the capital to get started in such a market.

Question5: Both of my prior comments would apply to this question. Lower the farm subsidies to the huge agri-business firms and help more small farmers.

Also, provide advice and option information to those who are now aware of what the big supermarkets purchase - much from overseas. Where possible, provide tax incentives, etc. to help some farmers start in the farming of these more exotic crops.

Question6: Besides providing the information and support and tax incentives (at both the state and federal levels), the organic market is a growing market, but as yet, many of the products are quite expensive compared to the ordinary supermarket. This limits the buyers of the product.

Organic products, non "genetically enhanced" products, beef and other meat grown without antibiotics are becoming more popular with the health conscious, but again, are fairly expensive in comparison.

We are considering purchasing our first diesel truck because of the possibility of bio-diesel fuels being promoted in Washington State. I know our Senators Cantwell and Murray are promoting tax and other incentives in this area. Iowa, Illinois and the midwestern states are very logical areas for such a promotional activity. Maybe bio-diesel fuel won't even smell as bad as petroleum diesel.