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Question1: Perhaps decoupling of subsidies from acreage and production numbers could begin to reduce the capitalization of program benefits into land prices. Perhaps a study of the I.R.C. Section 1031 like-kind exchange statute could determine whether it hinders entry of new farmers into the land market as well.

Question2: We should encourage trade of all agricultural products but not at the expense of independent farmers, who are our lifeblood. We already have too few operators of farms. The land and the nation would benefit most by encouraging, not discouraging, owner-operators, the mid-size farm operations. Land tenure goes hand in hand with national security. Perhaps we should determine why most all crops cannot be produced in some quantity within our national boundaries, then once national security and national health and safety concerns have been addressed, determine what else we should raise to sell for export and what we should be importing.

Put in other words: We must ensure a safe, affordable food supply for the country, produced by a stable, not decreasing, farm population. After that, perhaps we can study the global market to see what we could raise on a sustainable basis which would also bring profit to farmers.

Question3: I suggest that the nation attempt to reduce the competitive race to farm ever larger tracts of land by increasing incentives to those who treat their land with conservation practices and other "tender loving care" and decreasing incentives to those who simply farm for maximum short-term profit without consideration of conservation of natural resources. This would mean phase-out of direct subsidies and phase-in of more soil and water conservation measures. At the same time, we must simplify the CSP (Conservation Security Program) before it becomes so complex as to be unwieldy and can no longer be administered by the agencies charged with implementing and enforcing it. I would strongly encourage an immediate merger of the NRCS and FSA offices around the nation, to eliminate bureaucratic bloat.

Question4: See answer to Question 3.

Also: Study whether the farm sector is best suited to providing renewable energy for the nation or whether that is just another recipe for increasing pressure to "mine the land".

Question5: Perhaps encouragement of venture capital investment in rural America is the best approach.

Question6: Seems to me those approaches are receiving attention. Funding should not be cut, at the very least. Programs such as the Leopold Center at Iowa State University should receive more help, not less.