

# AGRICULTURAL AND CONSERVATION PLANKS IN THE DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

## AGRICULTURE

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*"The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living."*

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*We shall take positive action to raise farm income to full parity levels and to preserve family farming as a way of life.*

*We shall put behind us once and for all the timidity with which our Government has viewed our abundance of food and fiber.*

*We will set new high levels of food consumption both at home and abroad.*

*As long as many Americans and hundreds of millions of people in other countries remain underfed, we shall regard these agricultural riches, and the family farmers who produce them, not as a liability but as a national asset.*

**Using Our Abundance.** The Democratic Administration will inaugurate a national food and fiber policy for expanded use of our agricultural abundance. We will no longer view food stockpiles with alarm but will use them as powerful instruments for peace and plenty.

We will increase consumption at home. A vigorous, expanding economy will enable many American families to eat more and better food.

We will use the food stamp programs authorized to feed needy children, the aged and the unemployed. We will expand and improve the school lunch and milk programs.

We will establish and maintain food reserves for national defense purposes near important population centers in order to preserve lives in event of national disaster, and will operate them so as not to depress farm prices. We will expand research into new industrial uses of agricultural products.

We will increase consumption abroad. The Democratic Party believes our nation's capacity to produce food and fiber is one of the great weapons for waging war against hunger and want throughout the world. With wise management of our food abundance we will expand trade between nations, support economic and human development programs, and combat famine.

Unimaginative, outmoded Republican policies which fail to use these productive capacities of our farms have been immensely costly to our nation. They can and will be changed.

**Achieving Income Parity.** While farmers have raised their productive efficiency to record levels, Republican farm policies have forced their income to drop by 30%.

Tens of thousands of farm families have been bankrupted and forced off the land. This has happened despite the fact that the Secretary of Agriculture has spent more on farm programs than all previous Secretaries in history combined.

Farmers acting individually or in small groups are helpless to protect their incomes from sharp declines. Their only recourse is to produce more, throwing production still further out of balance with demand and driving prices down further.

This disastrous downward cycle can be stopped only by effective farm programs sympathetically administered with the assistance of democratically elected farmer committees.

The Democratic Administration will work to bring about full parity income for farmers in all segments of agriculture by helping them to balance farm production with the expanding needs of the nation and the world.

Measures to this end include production and marketing quotas measured in terms of barrels, bushels and bales, loans on basic commodities at not less than 90% of parity, production payments, commodity purchases, and marketing orders and agreements.

We repudiate the Republican administration of the Soil Bank Program, which has emphasized the retirement of whole farm units, and we pledge an orderly land retirement and conservation program.

We are convinced that a successful combination of these approaches will cost considerably less than present Republican programs which have failed.

We will encourage agricultural cooperatives by expanding and liberalizing existing credit facilities and developing new facilities if necessary to assist them in extending their marketing and purchasing activities, and we will protect cooperatives from punitive taxation.

The Democratic Administration will improve the marketing practices of the family-type dairy farm to reduce risk of loss.

To protect farmers' incomes in times of natural disaster, the Federal Crop Insurance Program, created and developed experimentally under Democratic Administrations, should be invigorated and expanded nationwide.

**Improving Working and Living on Farms.** Farm families have been among those victimized most severely by Republican tight-money policies.

Young people have been barred from entering agriculture. Giant corporations and other non-farmers, with readier access to credit and through vertical integration methods, have supplanted hundreds of farm families and caused the bankruptcy of many others.

The Democratic Party is committed by tradition and conviction to preservation of family agriculture.

To this end, we will expand and liberalize farm credit facilities, especially to meet the needs of family-farm agriculture and to assist beginning farmers.

Many families in America's rural counties are still living in poverty because of inadequate resources and opportunity. This blight and personal desperation should have received national priority attention long ago.

The new Democratic Administration will begin at once to eradicate long-neglected rural blight. We will help people help themselves with extended and supervised credit for farm improvement, local industrial development, improved vocational training and other assistance to those wishing to change to non-farm employment, and with the fullest development of commercial and recreational possibilities. This is one of the major objectives of the area redevelopment program, twice vetoed by the Republican President.

The rural electric cooperatives celebrate this year the twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The Democratic Congress has successfully fought the efforts of the Republican Administration to cut off REA loans and force high-interest-rate policies on this great rural enterprise.

We will maintain interest rates for REA co-ops and public power districts at the levels provided in present law.

We deplore the Administration's failure to provide the dynamic leadership necessary for encouraging loans to rural users for generation of power where necessary.

We promise the co-ops active support in meeting the ever-growing demand for electric power and telephone service, to be filled on a complete area-coverage basis without requiring benefits for special-interest power groups.

In every way we will seek to help the men, women, and children whose livelihood comes from the soil to achieve better housing, education, health, and decent earnings and working conditions.

All these goals demand the leadership of a Secretary of Agriculture who is conversant with the technological and economic aspects of farm problems, and who is sympathetic with the objectives of effective farm legislation not only for farmers but for the best interest of the nation as a whole.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

*A thin layer of earth, a few inches of rain, and a blanket of air make human life possible on our planet.*

*Sound public policy must assure that these essential resources will be available to provide the good life for our children and future generations.*

*Water, timber and grazing lands, recreational areas in our parks, shores, forests and wildernesses, energy, minerals, even pure air—all are feeling the press of enormously increased demands of a rapidly growing population.*

**Water and Soil.** An abundant supply of pure water is essential to our economy. This is a national problem.

Water must serve domestic, industrial and irrigation needs and inland navigation. It must provide habitat for fish and wildlife, supply the base for much outdoor recreation, and generate electricity. Water must also be controlled to prevent floods, pollution, salinity and silt.

The new Democratic Administration will develop a comprehensive national water resource policy. In cooperation with state and local governments, and interested private groups, the Democratic Administration will develop a balanced, multiple-purpose plan for each major river basin, to be revised periodically to meet changing needs. We will erase the Republican slogan of "no new starts" and will begin again to build multiple-purpose dams, hydro-electric facilities, flood-control works, navigation facilities, and reclamation projects to meet mounting and urgent needs.

We will renew the drive to protect every acre of farm land under a soil and water conservation plan, and we will speed up the small-watershed program.

We will support and intensify the research effort to find an economical way to convert salt and brackish water. The Republicans discouraged this research, which holds untold possibilities for the whole world.

## SENATOR KENNEDY'S COMMENTS ON THE PLATFORM

"The Democratic platform spells out what we will do to reverse the decline in farm income, and to meet our responsibilities to our farmers, our consumers and our taxpayers, to all America and to a hungry and troubled world.

That platform pledges, in unmistakable language 'positive action to raise farm income to full parity of income levels and to preserve family farming as a way of life'.

It means that farmers shall receive returns for their labor, for their managerial skills, and for their investment which are equal to the returns received for comparable human talents and resources in other types of enterprise.

**This is the strongest pledge ever given to the farmers of America by any political party in history.**

**I stand behind that pledge, and I intend to make good on it, beginning next January."**