

The LaRouche plan to solve the food crisis

During the 1984 presidential election, Independent Democratic candidate Lyndon LaRouche and his vice-presidential running-mate Billy Davis made the farm crisis a focus of national attention, especially through their Sept. 3 television broadcast, "The Food Shock of 1984." The program documented the food cartel's conspiracy to shut down production and drive the independent family farmer out of business. Throughout the campaign, LaRouche and Davis called for emergency measures to reverse the threat of global food shortages, in the context of the economic and military buildup required to implement the Strategic Defense Initiative. We publish here an excerpt from The Independent Democrats' 1984 Platform. Text abridged.

On the basis of various programs for rural America by the administration of Franklin Roosevelt, and through the establishment of the U.S. government's parity program for agricultural marketing, during World War II, during the 1950s and beyond, American farmers accomplished one of the greatest miracles in economics in modern history. They revolutionized agriculture through relatively massive investments in advanced technologies of agronomy and technological advances in equipment. *The highest rate of increase of productivity of labor in the postwar U.S. economy has occurred in the agricultural sector.* Yields per acre zoomed, while farmers' man-hours per unit of production fell.

The independent, family- or intra-family-operated farms and ranches today represent those farmers who, working as individual entrepreneurs, produced this economic miracle. As a group, the proven performance of these farmers proves that they are the best managers in our national economy.

Generally, of course, the present troubles of these farmers are a product of the same misguided monetary policies and post-industrial society trends which afflict every sector of basic industry. However, the present crisis in food supplies was caused either by special circumstances affecting agriculture caused either by special circumstances affecting agriculture more than other parts of the economy, or by the special way in which energy and banking policies of the 1973-84 period affect the exceptional features of agriculture.

The most significant of the special circumstances is the fact that since Orville Freeman's term at the Department of

Agriculture, that department's "supply management" policies have been designed to assist the grain cartel in wiping the independent American farmer off the map.

The President must act immediately, and move the Congress to act, to effect the following measures:

1) There must be an immediate moratorium on farm foreclosures, nationwide.

We must implement a policy of something like the following formulation: *Any farm which was in the top 75% of economic performance during the five-year period preceding 1981 should be protected from foreclosure. This action must be implemented under the title of National Security Emergency.*

2) Establish immediately, a policy of intervention to maintain farmers' prices at 90% of parity.

Generally, such a policy is implemented in the following way. If a farmer cannot sell a designated crop at the established percentile of a parity price or higher, the Department of Agriculture intervenes to buy that crop at that price. Then, later, either the grain cartel or agri-business can pay government that price plus a service charge for its purchase of this stock, or some of the stock is retained by the government as national strategic reserves, or, the government may directly market such stocks abroad under government-to-government trade-agreements.

3) The President and the Congress must intervene with emergency measures, to facilitate the reorganization of financial affairs.

It should be axiomatic, that by rescheduling existing farm debt of viable farms, at interest-rates between 2% and 4%, a 100% repayment of the principal value of the carried-forward debt will be the normal result. Federal action is required to ensure that restructured debt be classed as performing bank assets, and to provide simple procedures for conducting the financial reorganization.

It should be normal procedure, in these cases, that additional loan-capital be supplied, at prime rates of between 2% and 4% for loans based on lendable issues of gold-reserve U.S. currency notes through local banks. This should include crop-production loans, and also medium-term and long-term loans for needed capital improvements and replacements.

Such loans should be available to farmers generally.

4) Disaster relief for farms in relevant regions of the nation. For example, in regions hit by persisting drought conditions.

5) Immediate action to develop fresh-water management systems in areas suffering or threatened by major water shortages.

6) Immediate action establishing in the Department of Agriculture an improved market-forecasting system of service to and cooperation with farmers.

7) The President and Congress must take emergency action in response to the existing and worsening world food shortage.