

Agriculture by Robert L. Baker

'Big Brother' hawks environmentalism

Never mind about whether there is enough food. Your government has set a different agenda for "discussion."

On Nov. 7, Barber B. Conable, president of the World Bank, stated in an address to the International Planned Parenthood Federation, "The number of rural people who are landless has increased, adding to problems of poverty and aggravating social tensions." Conable went on: "Sustainable agriculture, that is, agriculture that can be practiced from one generation to the next, is impossible in this environment of expanding human population."

Conable's statement tells the real reason behind the current policy shift of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support Low-Input Sustainable Agriculture. This policy shift is to push population control by starvation—and to sugarcoat this most un-American of policies with pious phrases about protecting food quality and the environment.

Around the United States, numerous U.S. governmental agencies have become involved in setting the parameters of debate on the 1990 Farm Bill, so as to use environmental issues as an excuse to implement the policy of reduced food production, which means reduced population.

On Nov. 17-20, in Washington D.C., the leading agricultural chemical dealers from around the United States attended a conference entitled "Partners in Progress." The conference was co-sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and ICI Agricultural Products company, one of the world's largest farm chemical companies.

Why would the USDA, the EPA,

and ICI be working together to educate chemical dealers? The answer is summed up in one word: indoctrination.

Jack Parnell, deputy secretary of agriculture, gave the opening speech. He softened up the crowd of approximately 600 by addressing the "global perspective," that U.S. agriculture must "become more competitive, sustainable, and efficient" to participate in a more competitive global economy and to protect the environment.

Another speaker was Bob Redding, chief counsel to Sen. Wyche Fowler (D-Ga.), the senator who sponsored the Farm Conservation and Water Protection Act of 1989. This bill has focused the farm policy debate on unproven "alternative agricultural" farming methods and environmental concerns of agriculture. Redding implied that the biggest concern of most farmers and consumers is food safety and the environmental impact of modern farming methods.

Neill Schaller, program director for Low-Input Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education for USDA, and Jim Mosley of the Environmental Protection Agency, gave their respective indoctrination speeches to the conference. The underlying theme of each of these speakers was the need for major rethinking of food production methods in the United States, under the buzzwords of "global market" and "protecting the environment."

At other levels in the food production chain we have government indoctrination, i.e., government departments and agencies are telling food

producers and consumers what issues they should be concerned with, when it should be the other way around. The Extension Service of the USDA is sponsoring meetings in many states that invite many local citizens to participate in the debate on the 1990 Farm Bill, but limit the discussion to the issues selected by the Extension Service.

In Iowa, the Extension Service has orchestrated a satellite televised panel discussion that is shocking. A "focus group" made up of 30 of Iowa's "emerging leaders" was handpicked by the Iowa Extension Service. The focus group was told they were to discuss the impact of the 1990 Farm Bill on the economy of Iowa. Discussion, however, was limited to the areas of concern provided by USDA-prepared material, namely, the "environment."

On Nov. 20, a televised debate of the 1990 Farm Bill was beamed to 95 county Extension offices through the Iowa Public Broadcasting Network. The local county Extension agent was given orders to invite "influential local leaders."

Participants in the debate were a panel of Extension Service agent "experts" who fielded questions from an audience of concerned Iowans, all of whom were members of the Extension Service-selected "focus group." The focus group was provided typewritten questions, prepared by the Extension Service, to ask the panel during the show, since no private questions were allowed. The press and news media were invited to the studio. The farmers and local community leaders who watched the show were very subtly programmed and indoctrinated by the USDA, and then were handed a set of questions to answer with a 1 through 5 rating. There was no discussion or debate other than what the Extension Service orchestrated. So much for government by the people.