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THE 1937 AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN THE EAST CENTRAL STATES

A radio talk by W. G. Finn, Assistant Director of the East Central Division of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, Monday, December 21, 1936, the National Broadcasting Company and a network of associated radio stations.

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Thank you, Morse, if you have been listening to the National Farm and Home Hour in the past week you already have heard from the Northeast and Western Regions. Today, I am glad to have the opportunity to say something about the 1937 Agricultural Conservation Program as it applies to the East Central Region. We're glad to have you hear what we are planning to do in Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Some of the things I will say will apply to other sections also. As you know, the farm program for each Region is a part of the National program for the country as a whole.

We have been working on the 1937 farm program for some time. When I say we, I mean the farmers, the folks in the State Extension Services, committeemen, county agents, and the folks here in Washington. This program has been built around recommendations made by farmers and farmer-committeemen at community and county conferences or at other meetings held in the different States.

In shaping the 1937 plan, we have tried to include provisions which would make it fit the needs of all classes of farmers. Our aim has been to offer a program that would give help and encouragement to as many farmers as possible to conserve and build up their soil. Along with this, it is hoped that the gains in farm income which have been made in the past four years may be maintained.

The new program is built upon the same general plan as the one for 1936. The plan for 1937 offers payments to producers who meet specified conditions for shifting land from soil-depleting crops to soil-conserving crops, and for carrying out approved soil-building practices.

But there is one particular difference in the program for this year and the one for next year. Here it is: Under the 1936 program, many farmers did not know until late in the season just what they could do to contribute most toward its aims, nor how much money they could earn. However, under the 1937 plan, farmers, working with committeemen and the county office, will be able to determine in advance of the planting season the maximum acreage for which they can receive diversion payment, and the soil-building practices for which they can receive payments. In other words, a farmer can find out just how the program can be adapted to his farm, and what he can earn, before he starts to plant his crops.

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You recall the turn of events which made it necessary to announce the 1936 program in March of this year. It has been possible to announce next year's program considerably in advance of the planting season. This will enable farmers to study it more thoroughly, and, I believe, more will participate in the program. In spite of the late beginning this year, more farmers in the East Central Region took part in the 1936 program than in all of the old commodity programs in these States.

Now, I should like to say a few words about payments in 1937. As in 1936, there are to be two classes of payments. One is a diversion payment for shifting acreage from the production of soil-depleting crops to soil-conserving crops. The other is a soil-building payment for carrying out approved soil-building practices. The diversion payments with respect to cotton, tobacco, peanuts, and general soil-depleting crops will be similar to those under the 1936 program. The maximum shift for which the diversion payment can be obtained in 1937 is as follows: Cotton, 35 percent of the base; flue-cured, Burley and Maryland tobacco, 25 percent; fire-cured and dark air-cured tobacco, 30 percent; peanuts, 15 percent; general soil-depleting crops, 15 percent of the base. I think it is important to point out here that farms on which soil-depleting food and feed crops are not normally produced in excess of home needs will not be eligible to receive any payment for diversion of these food and feed crops. This provision conforms with the sound farming principle of maintaining an ample supply of crops for home consumption.

The payments for carrying out approved soil-building practices will again be limited to the amount of the soil-building allowance for the farm. In determining the soil-building allowance for the farm in 1937, the program has been broadened to give more consideration to the acreage of commercial orchards, commercial vegetables and non-crop pasture land. I believe next year's plan will prove very beneficial to orchard men, truck growers, and cattlemen. Small producers also will have greater opportunity of participating in the 1937 program. The minimum amount which any farmer can earn in 1937 is \$20, as compared with \$10 last year.

Now a word about bases. Bases will again be established for use in measuring the diversion of acreage from soil-depleting to soil-conserving crops. There will be separate bases for cotton, for tobacco, and for peanuts, and a general base for all other soil-depleting crops on the farm. These bases will be about the same as the 1936 bases with certain adjustments that may be needed to make them equitable between farms.

I see that my time is about up, but let me suggest that you get in touch with your county agent or local committeemen for further information about the 1937 farm program.