

SPEECH BY GOVERNOR VIC ATIYEH
5TH ANNUAL WILCO FARMERS AND GROWERS MEETING
BLACK ANGUS, SALEM
JANUARY 13, 1983

PREPARED TEXT

I HAVE NOT HAD AS MUCH OCCASION AS I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO
SPEAK OUT LATELY ON THE CHALLENGES FACING AGRICULTURE IN
OREGON. I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE THAT OPPORTUNITY TODAY.

I DO NOT NEED TO REMIND ANYONE HERE ABOUT THE HEAVY
BURDEN OREGON HAS CARRIED IN THIS TRAGIC NATIONAL RECESSION. THE
ECONOMY IS ON ALL OF OUR MINDS, AND HAS BEEN THE MAJOR ISSUE IN
THIS STATE SINCE THE RECESSION HIT US EARLY AND HARD.

JUST AS OREGON HAS SHOULDERED MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF
THIS RECESSION, SO OREGON AGRICULTURE IS SHOULDERING A MAJOR PART
OF THE ECONOMIC BURDEN WE FACE. LARGE CROP SUPPLIES AND THE WEAK
ECONOMY HAVE TAKEN THEIR TOLL ON OUR FARMERS -- EACH ONE OF YOU.

BUT AGRICULTURE IS STILL ONE OF OREGON'S TOP
INDUSTRIES. OUR STATE COULD NEVER EXIST WITHOUT THE 70,000
FULL-TIME JOBS AND \$6 BILLION THAT OREGON AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTES
TO OUR ECONOMY.

THIS IS THE THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR OF SERIOUSLY DEPRESSED COMMODITY PRICES IN AGRICULTURE. FOR A STATE THAT EXPORTS MOST OF WHAT IT PRODUCES, THE TREMENDOUS PRODUCTIVITY AND ABUNDANCE OF OREGON AGRICULTURE HAS NOW BECOME A BURDEN INSTEAD OF A BOON. WEAKENED CONSUMER DEMAND AND AGRICULTURAL SURPLUSES HAVE MEANT DEPRESSION-ERA INCOMES FOR MANY OREGON FARMERS. SOME ARE ON THE BRINK OF BANKRUPTCY -- OTHERS HAVE GONE OVER THE BRINK.

EACH OF YOU KNOWS THAT THIS GOVERNOR DOES NOT, CANNOT, AND WILL NEVER FIND THIS SITUATION ACCEPTABLE OR TOLERABLE FOR OREGON FARMERS.

TO TAKE ACTION AT THE STATE LEVEL, HOWEVER, WE MUST CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND SUPPORT THE STRENGTHS THAT WE HAVE. AS GOVERNOR, I HAVE ALWAYS INSISTED THAT STATE GOVERNMENT BE PART OF THE SOLUTION -- NOT PART OF THE PROBLEM.

OUR COMMODITY COMMISSION SYSTEM IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS. IT IS A SYSTEM THAT, TO REMAIN VIABLE, MUST REMAIN FREE OF LEGISLATION AND "KNOW-IT-ALL" INTERFERENCE. CRITICS OF THE COMMISSION SYSTEM NEED A GOOD EDUCATION -- AND IT IS AN EDUCATION WE SHOULD KEEP HANDY. WE MUST ALWAYS STRESS THAT FUNDS FOR COMMODITY COMMISSION ACTIVITIES ARE FARMERS' FUNDS -- NOT TAXPAYER DOLLARS.

THOSE TWENTY-TWO COMMISSIONS DO AN EXCELLENT JOB OF FUNDING VITAL RESEARCH, MARKETING, AND EDUCATION.

MARKETING ITSELF IS VITAL TO OREGON AGRICULTURE, AND IT IS ONE AREA WHERE WE CAN CONTINUE TO REPORT GOOD NEWS.

OREGON IS A LEADER IN MARKET PROMOTION FOR AGRICULTURE -- PARTICULARLY IN PACIFIC RIM COUNTRIES.

NO BETTER EXAMPLE CAN BE FOUND THAN THE PURCHASE LAST FALL OF SOME \$27 MILLION IN GRAIN BY THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA. I WELCOMED THE TRADING DELEGATION MYSELF IN THE CEREMONIAL OFFICE IN SALEM. THE DEAL IS A DIRECT RESULT OF OUR EFFORTS TO CONVINCE OUR FRIENDS IN TAIWAN THAT OREGON IS -- AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE -- A RELIABLE SUPPLIER OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES.

THE TAIWANESE HAVE SENT ANNUAL BUYING TEAMS TO OREGON EVERY YEAR FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS AS A DIRECT RESULT OF OUR EFFORTS. I HAVE PERSONALLY VISITED TAIWAN; AND WE IN OREGON HAVE WORKED VERY HARD TO PROMOTE OUR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

OUR STATE-ORGANIZED FOOD SHOWS CONTINUE TO OFFER OREGON FARMERS AND PROCESSORS A BARGAIN: REPRESENTATION BEFORE THOUSANDS OF QUALIFIED BUYERS, AND NUMEROUS TRADE LEADS.

OUR DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS REPRESENTED OREGON PRODUCTS WITH GREAT SUCCESS AT MANY FOOD SHOWS IN 1982. MAJOR FOOD SHOWS ALREADY PLANNED FOR 1983 INCLUDE SOUTH KOREA, SAUDI ARABIA, AND JAPAN.

THE COST THAT GROWERS OR DISTRIBUTORS PAY TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE SHOWS COVERS DISPLAYS, KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE TO DISCUSS AND SELL THE PRODUCT, TRAVEL COSTS THAT RETURN TRADE LEADS TO YOU, AND ANY SPECIAL PRODUCT PRESENTATIONS YOU WISH TO ARRANGE.

AS WE HAVE BROUGHT BACK NEW PROSPECTS -- PROSPECTS THAT MEAN POTENTIAL JOBS AND MARKETS FOR OREGON -- WE HAVE ALSO LEARNED A LOT ABOUT MARKETING ITSELF. WE KNOW THAT WE MUST TAILOR OUR PRODUCTS FOR THE MARKET; CHANGING PACKAGES, PRODUCT LINES -- EVEN TRANSLATING LABELS INTO ANOTHER LANGUAGE IF THAT IS WHAT WILL SELL THE PRODUCT. WE HAVE SEEN NEW TECHNIQUES LEAD TO NEW SALES IN TIMBER -- AND WE HAVE SEEN THE SAME THING HAPPEN IN AGRICULTURE.

OUR NEW CANEBERRY COMMISSION IS DEVELOPING MARKETS IN TAIWAN -- MARKETS THAT WILL BE VITAL TO GROWERS HERE IN OREGON. SEMINARS WE SPONSORED AND HOSTED AT BAKING SCHOOLS IN TAIWAN MET WITH A VERY ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE FROM TAIWAN BAKERS.

AS FOR SWEET CORN, WE ARE DEVELOPING EXCELLENT MARKETING PROSPECTS IN THE FAR EAST. I KNOW THAT OREGON SET A RECORD IN SWEET CORN PRODUCTION LAST YEAR. THAT IS WHY WE ARE VERY ENCOURAGED WHEN OUR TRADE SHOWS TELL US THAT THE FAR EASTERN PEOPLES HAVE HAD AN ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE TO THE PRODUCT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN SWEET CORN IS INCLUDED IN THE ORIENTAL DIET IN MANY FORMS.

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE FIRST-EVER "ALL U.S.A." FOOD SHOW WILL BE HELD IN MAY OF 1983 UNDER JOINT STATE AND FEDERAL SPONSORSHIP. OUR STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WILL BE RECRUITING HEAVILY IN OREGON TO ENCOURAGE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS UNIQUE EVENT. WE EXPECT MANY NEW TRADE LEADS TO BE DEVELOPED FOR OREGON IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD.

IN FACT, OREGON AGRICULTURE HAS BEEN FAR AHEAD OF ALMOST EVERY OREGON INDUSTRY IN COORDINATING ITS LOBBYING, MARKETING, AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY EFFORTS. FARMERS THEMSELVES ARE WORKING WITH US AND WITH EACH OTHER TO TURN OUR ECONOMY AROUND. WE HAVE SOWN THE SEEDS OF DEMAND IN NEW MARKETS -- OVERSEAS AND AT HOME -- AND WE WILL CONTINUE OUR STRONG EFFORTS AS WE MOVE FORWARD INTO A BETTER FUTURE FOR OREGON AGRICULTURE.

AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ARE IMPORTANT EFFORTS THAT STATE GOVERNMENT ITSELF MUST MAKE HERE IN OREGON TO MAKE SURE THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT.

ONE OF THE MAJOR AREAS WHERE STATE GOVERNMENT CAN FIGHT TO HELP -- NOT HINDER -- THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF OREGON FARMERS IS IN THE AREA OF BURDENSOME REGULATIONS. I HAVE FOUGHT -- AND WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT -- TO KEEP NEEDLESS REGULATIONS AND REGULATORS OFF THE BACK OF OREGON AGRICULTURE. UNDER THIS HEADING, I THINK OF AREAS SUCH AS:

- RESTRICTIVE PESTICIDE LAWS AND REGULATIONS;
- UNREALISTIC LABOR RULES; AND
- BURDENSOME TRANSPORTATION COSTS.

AT BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS, OREGON AGRICULTURE HAS FACED SERIOUS REGULATORY PROBLEMS. BUT WE ARE FORTUNATE, BECAUSE THERE IS A STRONG PHILOSOPHY AND TRADITION HERE OF KEEPING STATE REGULATORY PROCESSES IN PERSPECTIVE SO THAT FARMERS HAVE A CHANCE TO RECOVER FROM ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING THE INDUSTRY.

THE EMPHASIS HERE IN OREGON IS NOT -- AND NEVER HAS BEEN A PHILOSOPHY THAT GOVERNMENT HAS ALL THE ANSWERS. INSTEAD, THE EMPHASIS IN OREGON IS TO HELP THE FARMER HELP HIMSELF.

ANOTHER WIDELY MISUNDERSTOOD ISSUE IN OREGON IS THE USE OF AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS. THESE CHEMICALS ARE INDISPENSABLE TOOLS FOR OREGON FARMERS -- FREQUENT ATTACKS ON THEM ARE TOO OFTEN MADE BY CRITICS WHO CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED AS IGNORANT.

ONE OF THE MOST RECENT -- AND GRAPHIC -- EXAMPLES OF THIS CONTROVERSY IN STATE GOVERNMENT IS OUR GYPSY MOTH ERADICATION PROGRAM IN SALEM LAST SUMMER.

FORTUNATELY, REASON OVERCAME HYSTERIA AND THE PROGRAM WAS CARRIED OUT TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT IT WAS DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH.

HERE AGAIN, AGRICULTURE TOOK THE LEAD IN SHOWING THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE INSECT VERSUS THE SAFETY OF THE CHEMICAL USED TO CONTROL IT.

OREGON AGRICULTURE CONTINUES TO WORK CLOSELY WITH OREGON GOVERNMENT TO FACE AND RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES THE 1980'S HAVE BROUGHT TO US. THE SALEM GYPSY MOTH SPRAYING IS JUST ANOTHER GOOD EXAMPLE OF AGRICULTURE AND STATE GOVERNMENT WORKING TOGETHER TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IN A UNIFIED WAY.

YOUR GATHERING HERE TODAY IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THAT UNITY IN ACTION.

IN THIS ECONOMY -- WITH THESE CHALLENGES -- THE SPIRIT
OF COOPERATION, SELF-HELP, AND JOINT PROBLEM-SOLVING IS STILL ONE
OF THE GREAT SPIRITS OF THE OREGON FARMER.

AND IN TIMES LIKE THESE, THAT SPIRIT CONTINUES TO BE
ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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