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Question1: The reasons for high land prices are correctly identified as unintended consequences of USDA farm support programs. Farmers are almost assured a profit from their crops because they count on and consistently receive crop subsidies whether they turn the regular profit or have a disaster, which might have otherwise caused them to sell assets. This takes away much of the risk of farming.

As a farmer, I know that the business is risky and good management and marketing ability makes a lot of difference. But USDA programs have lowered the bar. Too many bad managers and bad management practices continue, along with increased debt. Farmers are willing and able, through debt and subsidized insurance and income, to buy more land and keep it.

If the USDA develops more programs to subsidize new farmers rather than allow the market to control their entry into the business, we will see more adverse problems along with the erosion of farming freedom and falling market prices. I suggest the USDA begin to narrow and cancel out loan, insurance, and crop subsidies. This will leave the good farmers standing, and allow better opportunities, which may rise out of a free market, for prospective farmers to enter the business.

Question2: The presupposition implicit in this question is that the U.S. is a single giant entity in a competition of nations. That is not the way economics works. That is also not the way of thinking that preserves family farms and individual liberties. I propose that the USDA cease this manner of thinking in its formation of policy.

Obtaining access to foreign markets is a good job for the USDA. But price supports on crops are counterproductive to that end, in that our subsidized crops become unfair competition to those crops of other nations. We see a clear example of this in the recent WTO ruling against U.S. cotton subsidies. Good foreign relations and open markets overseas will come when countries are not threatened by a nation of Federalized Farms with price supports.

Question3: The first question that should be asked is, "Should farm policy be designed to in any way to distribute monetary assistance to producers?" And for that question of right versus wrong, we turn to the Bible.

Leviticus 19:15 "You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty."

From this text we safely assume that redistribution of wealth, from citizens to farmers, whether they be rich farmers or poor farmers, is a violation of God's command.

I do believe, and it is noteworthy that, as you say, "program incentives lead to increased production and lower market prices."

Furthermore, are farm support payments constitutional? Look to the tenth amendment for the regulative principle of the Federal government. "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

The only part of the Constitution, which men have attempted to use to justify corporate subsidies such as these, is the provision for the "general welfare" in the preamble.

"We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

The preamble is a statement of purpose, rather than a statement of certain policy. For the ends mentioned, including promoting the general welfare, the complete text of the Constitution was established. This was not a granting of any amount of welfare for any purpose among any persons. It is the introduction to a foundation of liberty and justice.

To interpret "promote the general welfare" as "subsidize farmers with crop price supports" does violence to the other purposes of the Constitution, namely, "establish justice," and, "secure the blessings of liberty," in that it unjustly favors specific businesses by grants at the expense of other businesses in competition. In this case, some competitors of those receiving subsidies are prospective farmers.

Current farm support programs are unconstitutional, unbiblical, unjust, and violate my liberty to grow crops on my land without civil interference and manipulation.

Question4: Farmers have the most incentive to conserve the world environment because the productability of our business depends directly on the environment of our crops. We do not need more regulations to achieve conservation and environmental goals. We live in the country because we like clean air and water. And we are the stewards of our land.

Question5: Rural communities are now almost dominated by non-farming families because of the attraction of the country to Americans. They drive into town to work precisely because of new technologies.

The last century's American tyrannical legacy of the confiscation of gold, debasement of currency, and subsidization of farming has greatly contributed to the public desire to invest in land. Land prices are so high that the average American needs to get a 30 year mortgage on a used home to start a family. If the USDA would stop subsidizing farmers, it might greatly contribute to making farm life affordable to more families.

Government attention should not be focused on investing in the infrastructure of rural America by routing a new bypass through my home farm. The USDA can provide effective assistance by protecting family farms from eminent domain.

Question6: Agriculture product development will best be achieved by private businesses when they are allowed to function in a free market.

Marketing farm products is the prerogative of individual farmers, voluntary associations, and commercial businesses. When the civil government involves itself, at the request of a majority or otherwise, to market certain products or create advertising campaigns, it is to the detriment of other private businesses who are in competition.

The USDA can assist in the free expansion of renewable fuels by deregulating the production of ethanol and soy-diesel. Currently is it illegal for a corn farmer to distill his own corn for research, consumption, or fuel purposes. When these regulations are lifted we will see major advances in fuel production technology and efficiency.