

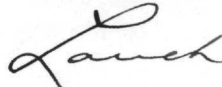
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 12, 1943.

Dear Marriner:

I think you might be interested in the attached memorandum. The President sent it along to Wickard saying that he thought it contained some excellent suggestions and that he wanted to see Wickard and McNutt about it. It may have helped a bit in putting some backbone into Wickard where, I am informed, it is sadly needed. Anything you could do to increase ~~the~~ pressure would, I know, be most helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Lauchlin Currie

Honorable Marriner Eccles,
Chairman, Board of Governors of the
Federal Reserve System,
Washington, D. C.

C O P Y

December 30, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Re: Increasing Food Production.

I think this is a subject that you may wish to check up on. My own impression is that food goals for 1943 have not been set sufficiently high and that we are not doing enough to ensure that even these goals will be met. I do not think there is any danger of our people going hungry. Failure to increase our food production substantially, however, jeopardizes one of the most important elements in the Administration's war and post-war plans -- the feeding of foreign armies and foreign civilian populations -- because of the political capital that can be made out of the food shortages at home. I have been told that England has been able to increase its food production by 50 percent with very little additional manpower. Some of the methods that have been mentioned as possible ways to increase agricultural production are as follows:

1. The President might raise the goals for most of the agricultural program just as he earlier raised the goals for the War Production program.
2. The Department of Agriculture might be directed to present a new production program, and, in pursuance of new over-all objectives, directed to present, if necessary, a new budget.
3. A large-scale effort should be instituted immediately to aid the most efficient farmers. This requires removal of all acreage allotments and other restrictions on production. It also requires large scale shift of subsistence farmers into the ranks of farm workers, after preliminary training. Some form of price guarantee is probably necessary.
4. Institute measures to bring into full production approximately one million farm operators who are just below the two million most efficient farmers and who do not now produce enough to keep their labor fully employed. These measures would require a large scale effort to make available to these farmers seed, fertilizer, machinery, livestock and some additional land.

5. Make a more determined effort (a) to reduce acreage devoted to cotton and tobacco, (b) to remove the corn acreage allotment, and (c) feed more wheat to livestock. This latter might be done by instituting a two-price system for wheat. We now have on hand two years' supply of short staple cotton and abundant supplies of tobacco. Acreage devoted to tobacco is actually scheduled to increase next year. In general, every effort should be made to convert benefit and parity payments into a new type of payment to increase war food production.

6. In addition to the training and transportation of subsistence farmers, organize a new land army along the lines of English experience. People from cities and towns, particularly women, could aid not only in meeting the peak seasonal requirements but also the year-round requirements. This requires the complete meshing of the recruiting and replacement services of USES with the food production program.

7. Institute measures to ensure that truck farmers and others on rich soil will convert production from non-essential crops like iceberg lettuce to essential crops.

8. Increase the facilities for processing and drying foods and provide new collection and marketing facilities in small and diversified crop areas. This may necessitate the allocation of additional critical materials by WPB.

9. The successful prosecution of an all out production drive requires action at the county level more responsive to national direction than at present exists. Locally elected committeemen, for example, cannot be expected to exert themselves to move under-employed farm labor out of their counties to areas of labor shortages.

10. In general, a real effort should be made to take advantage of Farm Mobilization Day, January 12, to present a comprehensive program of action rather than merely to exhort farmers to produce more.

In addition, a critical review of army and lend-lease food requirements might reveal unnecessarily large demands.

(Signed) Lauchlin Currie