Farm Bureau at Work

Agriculture Day

By LELAND VIDRINE
Farm Bureau President

In April we have a special day designated as Agriculture Day. This year it's April 18, and the whole idea is to call attention to the image of agriculture and the good things that farmers do. You probably need that good image now, more than ever.

Agriculture, unfortunately, is too complicated for most of the public to comprehend. In addition, the public is quite complacent about agriculture because we as a nation have never been hungry. Contrast this to the countries of Europe or Japan or other nations who have indeed experienced hunger and starvation in their lifetime. The leaders of the Common Market Countries in Europe make no bones about it. They support their farmers at a highly subsidized level with the support of the public in their countries because the public remembers being hungry and being cut off from world food supplies. The same is true in Japan and many other countries.

Contrast that to the public of the United States who have had abundance, high quality, ready distribution, and the added experience of always dealing with surpluses rather than shortages.

How to get and keep a good image is not as simple as it might sound. Just being a good person doesn't get you in the news. It takes a constant effort by every individual in agriculture to just stay even.

Louisiana Farm Bureau's Information Department is constantly working to get the positive side of agriculture in the news. Through Louisiana Network's agricultural news programming, Farm Bureau is able to relay market prices and important news stories to over 40 radio stations in the state. In 1981 Farm Bureau began producing a 30-minute television program entitled, "This Week in Louisiana Agriculture." The format is geared to farmers but has many articles of interest to the nonfarmer.

This program is aired on KALB-Channel 5, Alexandria; KNOE-Channel 8, Monroe; WAFB-Channel 9, Baton Rouge; KPLC-Channel 7, Lake Charles; and KATC-Channel 3, Lafayette. Check your local listings for the time in your area.

Just this year, Louisiana Public Broadcasting began airing a five-minute market news program at 6:40 each morning. The program airs daily on all of LPB's stations in the state.

And finally, if the money is appropriated by the legislature in the 1983 Regular Session, Farm Bureau will be working on a 17-hour farm news program available through LPB. The new system, called INFOTEX, is based on the closed caption, hearing-impaired system. Farm news will be programmed by Farm Bureau with the help of USDA and the State Department of Agriculture.

The farmers' story is important to all segments of the country, and the Farm Bureau is uniquely qualified as an organization to get this ball rolling. Through its very structure, Farm Bureau can stress the value of a healthy agriculture to the total economy.