Agriculture Future 'Is Not Very Bright'

The future of agriculture in Lafayette Parish "is not very bright," according to A. J. Brackin, parish county agent. One reason is that the better farm land in the parish is being swallowed up by urbanization. Another reason is that as land in the parish becomes more and more scarce, the price tag on an acre of rural property goes up and up. What with the going price for an acre of land ranging from $2,000 to $3,500, a farmer in this parish can't afford to buy enough land to make his soybean, cotton or dairy operation pay.

Brackin, who has been close to agriculture for many years, sees agriculture being pushed out of the parish the way it has been in the huge urban areas around New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Subdivisions are springing up all over the rural areas on what used to be prized farm land.

The situation was the same last year at Progress Edition time and Brackin said so.

Brackin is not a pessimist, but he does call things the way he sees them. And, indeed, the outlook is not good.

Yields of most crops were way up in 1972, but the costs of harvesting those crops, because of adverse weather or whatever, were way, way up. Net profits to the farmer were down. And as farm operating expenses soar, more and more hard-working people are getting out. More than a dozen parish families got out last year, in fact.

Brackin doesn't like to see this happen, but he has known it was coming.