

More "business-like" organization proposed for USDA . . . Plans for reorganized research service announced . . . Bureau to be abolished

CREATION of a more business-like, efficient, and decentralized operation, designed to provide better service to farmers, is envisioned by Secretary of Agriculture Ezra T. Benson in his new proposed reorganization plan.

Emphasis on marketing rather than crop production, a strong trend toward direct federal-state lines of authority rather than through regional offices, and grouping of USDA bureaus according to function rather than by commodity is noted throughout the plan.

The new reorganization is the second in USDA since the new Administration came into power. The first was on a

limited scale based on authority possessed by Mr. Benson as Secretary. Major changes, such as those envisioned in the new plan, required prior legislative sanction.

The proposed plan is being met with a wide range of reaction, all the way from complete approval to scathing denunciation. Present indications are that the plan will not become effective without considerable controversy.

Conflicts of opinion are not surprising as every aspect of American agriculture seems to create controversy. Sharp differences of opinion arose when Congress was debating whether to give Mr. Benson

authority to reorganize his department. The legislation, as finally approved, called for Mr. Benson to give advance notice of any plan to reorganize.

The proposed reorganization, officially announced on Oct. 13, constituted such advance notice. USDA is giving interested parties until Nov. 1 to submit their views. It will take an additional six to eight weeks to evaluate proposals and draft a final plan.

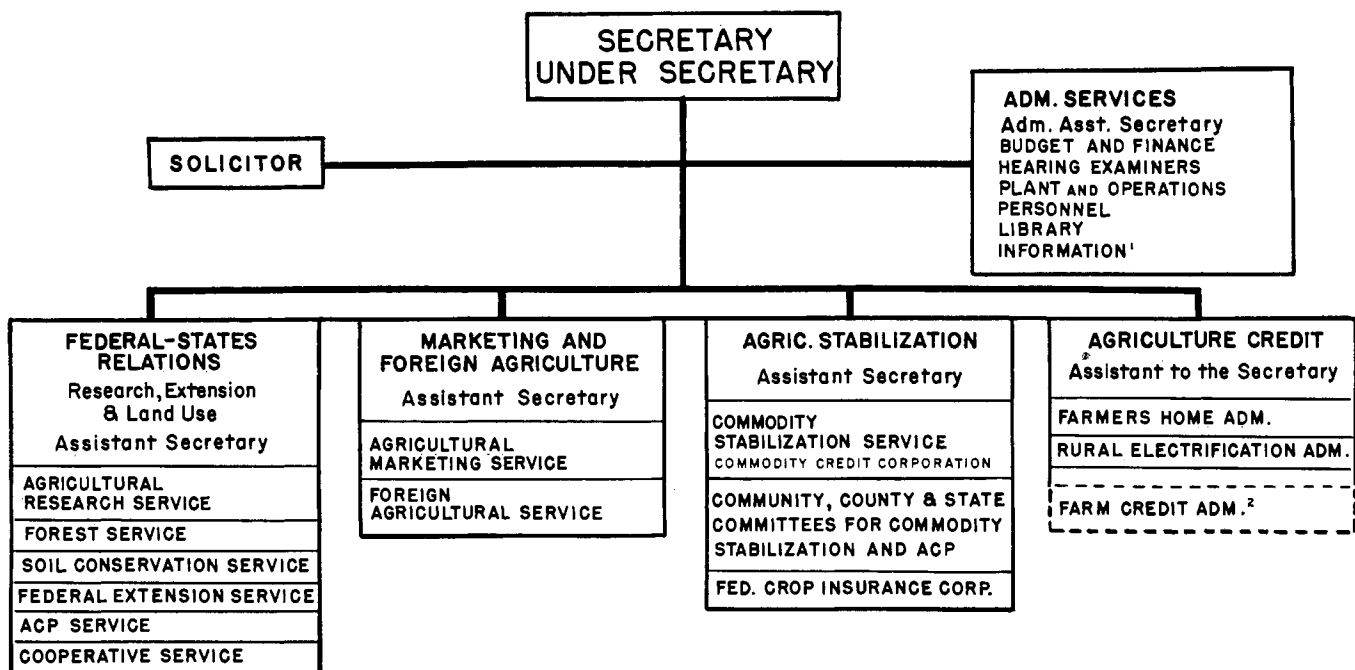
Mr. Benson says that USDA discussed the proposed plan with Congressional agricultural leaders, National Agricultural Advisory Commission, and representatives of Land Grant Colleges, President's Committee on reorganization, farm organization leaders, and other interested groups.

The new organization, Mr. Benson says, which streamlines and simplifies internal organization, should meet present day needs, particularly with respect to marketing. Use of community, county and state farmer committees in administration of certain phases of conservation, price support and marketing quota programs will continue.

Production and Marketing Administration and Bureau of Agricultural Economics are being abolished and their functions assigned to other services. Strengthening of state soil conservation offices and elimination of seven regional offices is also proposed. A regrouping of research activities is planned. Details of this aspect are discussed below.

Except for integration of former Agricultural Research Administration research bureaus and transfer of functions of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics

PROPOSED REORGANIZATION U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



¹ DECISION REGARDING INFORMATION WILL AWAIT FURTHER STUDY

² PUBLIC LAW 202 ESTABLISHES THE FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION AS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY. THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE NAMES ONE OF THE 13 BOARD MEMBERS.

and Production and Marketing Administration, most other USDA agencies retain their major functions. There will be, however, many changes in names and concentration of related but widely dispersed work.

Four Major Groups in New Setup

The new plan would consolidate some 20 different organizations into five major groups. In addition to the Administrative Services group which will be under an administrative assistant secretary, there will be four major service groups each handled by an assistant secretary of assistant to the secretary. These are Federal-States Relations including research, extension, and land use; Marketing and Foreign Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization; and Agricultural Credit.

Federal-States Relations will include Agricultural Research, Forest, Federal Extension, Soil Conservation, Agricultural Conservation Program and Cooperative Services. Details of the effects on Agricultural Research Administration are described below.

The Forest Service will continue to be responsible for promoting conservation and best use of the Nation's forest resources. Management of certain publicly owned lands (under Title III, Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act) would be transferred to Forest Service from Soil Conservation Service. Forest disease and pest research and control work will be removed from ARA and given to Forest Service.

Soil Conservation Service will be continued as USDA's technical service agency in soil and water conservation and flood prevention. Its duties will include aid in bringing about physical adjustments in land and water use to conserve natural resources and reduce

hazards of flood and sedimentation. State offices of the service will be given greater responsibility as they take over responsibilities of regional offices which are being discontinued.

Federal Extension Service will continue to head general educational programs and will act as liaison between USDA and agricultural extension service of Land-Grant colleges. The extension service will also handle all work of the technical collaboration branch of the Foreign Agricultural Service.

Analysis and service activities with farmer cooperatives will be vested in Cooperative Research and Service Division. This division had been in the Farm Credit Administration until Congress transferred it.

Marketing and Foreign Agriculture group will consist of Agricultural Marketing and Foreign Agricultural Services.

Marketing and distribution functions of USDA will be centralized in Agricultural Marketing Service. This includes marketing research and related statistical and economic research; marketing services, including crop and livestock estimates, market news, standardization, grading, inspection and classification of farm products; and marketing and regulatory acts, including marketing agreements and orders. Coordination of all statistical work of USDA will be centered in this group.

Several functions now vested in other agencies will be transferred to Agricultural Marketing Service. These include research, analytical and statistical work of Bureau of Agricultural Economics except farm management and land use research which go to Agricultural Research Service. Off-farm handling, transportation and storage research activities of Agricultural Research Administration will be transferred as will marketing research and marketing services from Pro-

duction and Marketing Administration. Also to be transferred from PMA are administration and marketing and regulatory acts including marketing agreements and orders.

The new service will also take over food trade activities of PMA and food distribution activities including school lunch program. One last function to be transferred to this group is administration of Commodity Exchange Act.

Foreign Agricultural Service will have primary responsibility for matters pertaining to agricultural trade and relationships with foreign areas. This new service will take over certain functions relating to import controls under both the Agricultural Adjustment Act (Sect. 22) and the Defense Production Act.

The new Agricultural Stabilization group will consist of Commodity Stabilization Service, Community, County and State Committees, and Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

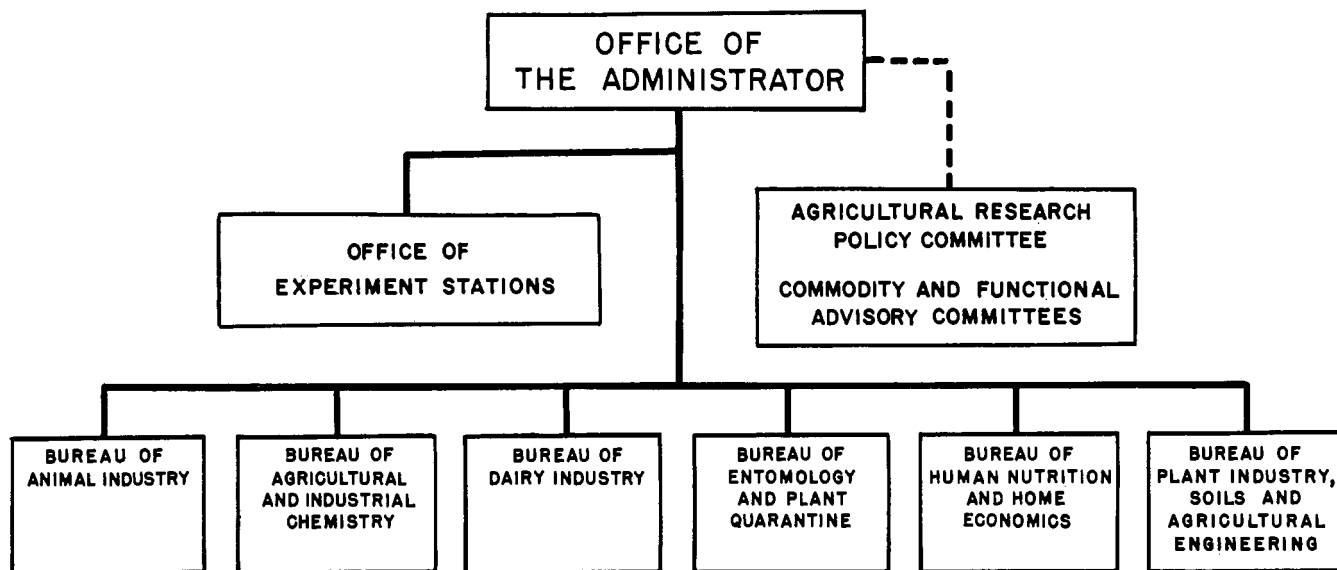
Commodity Stabilization will be responsible for such adjustment activities as acreage allotments and marketing quotas, stabilization of sugar production, price support, foreign supply programs, commodity disposal and administration of International Wheat Agreement. Commodity Credit Corp. programs will be administered by this group. All these activities have been centered in PMA.

Present Community, County and State Committees, which are now a part of PMA, will be transferred. These committees carry on commodity stabilization and conservation programs on a field level.

Opposing Views Presented

Strong opposition to the proposed changes in the soil conservation program has been expressed by the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts

PRESENT AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION



and by Senators Estes Kefauver (D-Tenn.) and Olin D. Johnston (D-S.C.).

Some Democratic Congressmen, including Sen. Kefauver and Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.), favor holding up the proposed plan until after Congress reconvenes in January. Rep. Frank L. Chelf (D-Ky.) has indicated opposition to the plan.

The National Grange and National Council of Farmer Cooperatives favor the proposal as being one that will streamline and decentralize USDA.

Sen. George D. Aiken, (R-Vt.) chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, favors the plan because he feels it will reduce costs, strengthen soil conservation, and lend importance to the watershed conservation policy.

Research Reorganization

Thus far, administrative workers at the USDA have released only general details of the proposed reorganization of the Agricultural Research Service (see chart).

One of the most conspicuous differences between this organization and the present operation of the USDA is the separation of research and control activities. According to Agriculture administrators, this change is a result of recommendations of the Hoover Commission on government reorganization. All control responsibilities of the department will be under the direction of a deputy administrator of control and regulation. This change involves taking the control

of the Federal insecticide and fungicide act from the former Production and Marketing Administration and placing it in the hands of the research service. The Hoover recommendations called for the control functions to be placed in a separate branch of the USDA and this move is regarded as a compromise with those recommendations. The control operations will still be within the Agricultural Research Service but separated from the research functions of the service.

The consolidation of the control activities of the USDA seems to have met with general approval in Washington. However, there is some criticism that the separation may have been too complete for effective liaison between research and control workers. The control of agricultural pests and diseases is still in many cases a problem of active research and critics of the complete separation plan have proposed a combination of the two functions into a research control group.

The new organization calls for the dissolution of the existing bureau structure shown on the chart of the Agricultural Research Administration.

Details on the actual research organization have not been officially released by Assistant Secretary Coke. However, general opinion seems to be that the various divisions of the bureaus will be transferred to the different vertical research organization on the chart. The director of Crop Research, for example, will probably be in charge of branches concerned with field and horticultural crops as well as entomological research.

The regional laboratories of the department will be under the director of Utilization Research.

Under this reorganization scheme the various research bureaus presently existing will be splintered with the previous existing branches of these bureaus going into separate research divisions of the new organization. The Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine (BEPQ) is perhaps the most seriously affected by this move.

The plant quarantine and insect control functions of the BEPQ will probably be transferred to the director of Crop Control and Regulation. The forest insect research activities will go to the Forest Service. The animal insect and public health research activities will be under the director of Livestock Research, the remaining activities will be under the director of Crop Research.

The organization of information activities for the new research service has not yet been announced. At present the information of the various research bureaus has been handled as an integral part of the research structure of the bureau. Thus the BEPQ has an information section of its own. The object of this organization has been to have information activities as close as possible to the research scientists so that as information of value to the farmer can be made available as rapidly and accurately as possible. Also requests for information are addressed to the persons who have the knowledge to answer the questions with the latest research information.

PROPOSED ORGANIZATION AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

