

Agriculture by Marcia Merry

What's wrong with Edward Madigan

The secretary of agriculture nominee is part of the Bush team that is destroying what's left of U.S. agriculture.

On Jan. 25, George Bush announced the nomination of Rep. Edward Madigan (R-Ill.) for agriculture secretary. He is to replace Clayton Yeutter, who in March becomes chairman of the national Republican Party.

The first reaction from farm circles was glee to see Yeutter go, and relief that a "production agriculture"—not a "market agriculture"—man was appointed. Yeutter is a notorious servant of the cartel interests that dominate farm commodity markets. For years he headed the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. In the mid-1980s, he became U.S. special trade representative, and became secretary of agriculture under Bush in 1989. Yeutter's cartel backers wanted him to head the USDA when Reagan first came into office, but they knew that he was too repulsive to farmers at that time.

Madigan has the aura of being a nicer guy—but, remember, he is still Bush's choice. Madigan has been in Congress 18 years, with 16 years' service on the House Agriculture Committee. He represents the 15th Congressional District in Illinois, a top farm region.

However, to come into office as a member of the Bush team is sufficient cause for ineligibility to serve. The agriculture policy that has come to prevail in the Reagan-Bush years has led to hunger and starvation on the scale of genocide in Africa, and impoverishment of farmers everywhere.

If the Senate confirmation hearings do their job, they will have to take up how to implement emergency

measures that can expand output and restore family farms.

● **Food supply crisis.** Worldwide, there is insufficient food, and the food cartel companies (Cargill, Continental, ADM/Toepfer, Louis Dreyfus, Bunge, André, Unilever, and others) control supplies in violation of all rights of national sovereignty. From 1987 through 1989, the global grain harvests were 20-30 million tons a year less than even minimum consumption levels (themselves inadequate nutritionally). The 1990 wheat harvest did not make up the gap.

● **Food as a weapon.** The U.S. State Department, in collusion with Britain and the United Nations, is enforcing food shortages to the point of genocide in Africa and elsewhere.

● **Financial crisis.** U.S. farmers are facing mass ruin under the combined impact of low prices from the cartels—for example, the wheat price—plus debt service burdens, and high costs. The USDA lending arm, the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), for example, is conducting a "slowdown" in processing operating loans for spring planting, even for its borrowers who are current on their debt payments. The House Agriculture Committee has scheduled hearings for Feb. 21.

● **Unscientific policies.** The USDA has colluded with the Environmental Protection Agency and other government bodies to misinform farmers and the public on questions of farm technology, infrastructure, and food chemistry, in violation of the original mandate to promote scientific agriculture given to the USDA by the adminis-

tration of President Abraham Lincoln, who founded the department.

Instead of addressing these questions, Madigan on Jan. 25 issued a four-paragraph, greeting-card style statement of his intentions:

"Mr. President, I want to thank you for this opportunity to serve you and the farmers and ranchers of our country. . . . My goal is to carry out the President's desire that rural Americans have a strong voice in the councils of government."

These pious sentiments reflect Madigan's record as a team player for Bush. For example, on Bush's Clean Air Act, Madigan worked on the ethanol provision—a boondoggle for Archer Daniels Midland, not for farmers. ADM has received billions in government give-aways for ethanol.

In announcing the Madigan appointment, Bush praised Madigan as a "compromiser" who "cares deeply about our farm policies." Specifically, Madigan worked on the 1985 and 1990 national farm laws—both of which ushered in unprecedented, and un-American measures, such as the Dairy Herd Termination program, to induce farmers to kill their cows.

The general feeling among farmers is that Madigan is a good choice for agriculture secretary, on the grounds of "anything but Yeutter," even if Madigan has two heads and eight legs. The head office of the National Farmers Union issued a release Jan. 28 calling Madigan a "good choice," and saying they think he "will prove to be more moderate and pragmatic than Yeutter has been." NFU head Leland Swenson said, "Secretary Yeutter simply has not represented family farm agriculture. That was evident in the low-price policies he pushed during the farm bill debate, and in his position during the GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] talks."