Sugar Industry No. 1
Producers' Problem

DENVER — Sugarbeet producers consider the ailing domestic sugar industry their number one problem as representatives of the nation's largest beet grower organization meet in Denver this week.

Five hundred growers, delegates and their wives are attending the four-day annual conference of the National Sugarbeet Growers Federation. The organization headquarters in Greeley and Washington, D.C. and speaks for producers in 12 states. Federation membership is confined largely to western states with representatives attending also from Ohio and Michigan.

Henry "Hank" Schaffer, a beet grower from Sterling, is presiding over the conference. Schaffer said lack of a national sugar policy and a glut caused by the dumping of sugar produced outside the United States are responsible for less than break even prices for this year's crop of sugarbeets. "We've enjoyed a better than average crop this year only to see sugar prices slide to near record lows," he said.

Schaffer said imports have plagued domestic beet producers since the U. S. Sugar Act "ran out" in 1974. He also cited the urging of the federal government to substantially increase beet acreage as a big factor that helped place beet growers in their present difficulty.

Beet growers will move into committees today to discuss the problems they face and seek possible solutions. The following day, Ambassador Clayton Yeutter, Deputy Special Representative for Trade Negotiations, Washington, D.C., will be the featured luncheon speaker.

The general session starts Dec. 9 when delegates will hear from a line-up of speakers who will cover a wide range of subjects.

Highlights of the day include a look at weather prospects by Dr. Wayne Decker, chairman of the Department of Atmospheric Science, University of Missouri. Richard W. Blake, executive vice president of the National Sugarbeet Growers Federation, Washington, D.C., will give his 29th annual report to the conference. Blake will focus on the lack of a national sugar policy and outline both near and long term legislative needs of the domestic sugar industry.

After lunch, growers will hear from Paul Pilkauskas, of the United States Department of State, Washington, D.C. They also will hear from Perry Ellsworth, National Council of Agriculture Employers, Washington, D.C. and Ted Brown, president, First National Bank, Denver.

Final speaker, Dale Hendricks, is chairman elect of the Agriculture Council of America from Bloomfield, Iowa.