Future Farm Export

Embargo 'Unlikely'

By BOB GUSTIN
Of the Star-Herald

SCOTTSBLUFF — Richard Bell, assistant secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs, said here Friday night he is "very confident" there will never be another farm product export embargo under President Ford except in cases of national emergency.

He said the past two years have been "creative periods" for U.S. foreign and farm policy-making, which have brought about a shift in American farm policy, aimed at letting farmers make their own decisions on planting, harvesting and selling crops.

FULL PRODUCTION at market-oriented prices is the goal of the foreign agriculture trade policy, Bell said, adding that "full production" means whatever farmers decide to produce.

Bell predicted exports of corn and soybeans will be at maximum levels for the 1976-77 season, although there will be a surplus of wheat because of large harvests. He added, however, that he feels the wheat situation may be different by next summer.

Bell said Ford is waiting on a report from the International Trade Commission before setting sugar import quotas.

BELL SAID HE expects strong export traffic of American farm products to Peru, Poland, Brazil and Egypt. He said export sales to the Soviet Union are going well.

Bell said that tripling the custom duty on imported sugar is not enough protection for American sugar beet farmers, but said it is recognition of the need for some protection from imported sugar cane.

He said the Ford administration will work with Nebraska Sen. Carl Curtis on reforms for the Meat Import Act of 1964, including a possible change which allows imports to be adjusted according to U.S. production.

Some relief to bean producers in western Nebraska may be forthcoming through the "Food for Peace" program, Bell said.

BELL SPOKED AT a campaign appearance sponsored by the Ford committee which was attended by about 100 people. He has been a member of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford.

Rep. John Y. McCollister, a Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate, spoke briefly before Bell, stressing his relationship with small business and agriculture. He said the National Federation of Independent Business has rated McCollister with the best record for serving small businessmen of anyone in Congress.

McCollister said the AFL-CIO is the greatest influence in Congress to produce a "flood of spending," and noted his opponent, Omaha Mayor Edward Zorinsky, has received AFL-CIO endorsement.

HE MENTIONED a poll in a Sunday issue of the Omaha World-Herald which showed him behind Zorinsky in the race, and said the outpouring of enthusiasm and interest in his behalf since the poll was published has been a "humbling experience."

Bell was quoted in Kearney by the Associated Press as saying recently resigned Sec. of Agriculture Earl Butz will go down in history as the best secretary of agriculture ever.