

Carter Sugar Plan Near?

WASHINGTON (AP)

— President Carter may announce within a week a new U.S. sugar program aimed at helping domestic growers without cutting imports so much that it will drive up consumer sugar prices, Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland said Wednesday.

"I think it's safe to say that there will be no restrictive quotas pinched down to the point where we artificially inflate domestic prices," Bergland said.

Bergland indicated that he personally favors setting a quota on sugar imports of around 4.5 million to 4.6 million tons, the amount estimated to be imported this calendar year.

The plan also calls for a government support program to help domestic sugarbeet and sugar cane growers who have been financially hard pressed by declining prices.

Bergland said that under this plan a guaranteed price of 13 cents to 14 cents a pound would be set for raw sugar. The New York spot price of raw sugar, the main guideline for the program, now is slightly less than 12 cents a pound.

Under the plan, USDA would buy domestically grown raw sugar at 13 to 14 cents a pound and then sell it back to refiners at the going market price of imported sugar.

In that way, processors can afford to pay domestic producers 13 to 14 cents a pound regardless of the market price. That means, at current prices, the government will absorb up to two cents a pound in the purchase-resale operation.

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Diversified Mortgage REIT Swaps Loan for Cut in Debt

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — Diversified Mortgage Investors said it swapped a loan it made in May 1970 to four subsidiaries of Great Western United Corp. for a reduction of \$20.8 million of debt owed to Bankers Trust Co., New York, and National Bank of Commerce, Dallas.

The real estate investment trust said that after the swap it owes \$152 million, plus interest of \$20 million, to 35 banks. That includes a remaining \$8 million to Bankers Trust, it said. It doesn't owe National Bank any more money, it said.

Diversified Mortgage said the swap resulted in resolution of a suit bought last summer by Great Western Cities Inc., one of the four subsidiaries. The suit, filed in a California state court, sought \$25.4 million in damages for alleged violation of California's usury law.

Diversified Mortgage said that "a judgment was entered pursuant to stipulation of the parties resolving the dispute in favor of" the trust. It declined to explain the legal language.