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News from *Western* **WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY**

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AG OUTLOOK OPTIMISTIC FOR KENTUCKY

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Some 200 registrants at a conference on the outlook for Kentucky agriculture were treated to the insights of national experts in farm economics at Western Kentucky University Thursday and Friday (Feb. 21-22).

Opinions were offered Thursday by U.S. Assistant Agriculture Secretary Will Erwin, international grain expert Clarence D. Palmby, and two professors of agricultural economics, Dr. Charles French from Purdue and Dr. Robert Rudd of the University of Kentucky.

In a banquet address Thursday evening, Erwin said farmers have done more to increase the level of living for all Americans than any other comparable group in the United States.

"Americans have more of their take-home pay available for other items after paying food bills than anywhere else in the world," Erwin said, "available for non-food goods and services that also contribute to their standard of living."

As compared with the output of 1930, today's farmers are producing over twice as much food on approximately the same acreage with one-sixth as much labor. Output per man-hour is up seven-fold, Erwin said.

Palmby, who has been instrumental in making arrangements for sale of grains to overseas markets, outlined the changes which have been taking place in level of interest by American farmers in exporting to foreign markets.

"Almost overnight, so to speak," he said, "the world realized that there is not an endless supply of commodities, there is not an endless supply of energy, there is not an endless supply of any number of metals and raw materials needed and desired by many nations."

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Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101

Palmby said he is not pessimistic about the continued high level of U. S. agriculture exports. "As of this minute," he said, "it appears that world demand for meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products will remain strong, which is key to global demand for our feed grains and oilseeds."

Palmby, former U.S. assistant secretary of agriculture, is vice president of the Continental Grain Co.

Americans have accepted the sale of agricultural products abroad "because it has been one of the most effective things in helping us balance our international trade program and has allowed us something to trade for oil and other energy imports so necessary for our country at this time," Dr. French said.

Dr. French predicted that the world production of most crops will be up during the next two years, including substantial increases in cattle and hogs.

"Farmers could be in for a rather substantial change toward lower prices and lower incomes," Dr. French said, while "costs continue to go on up." He said the longer-range picture was much better, however, "and more exciting and profitable than the last (decade)."

"Our international trade is the key to our agricultural outlook over the next decade," Dr. French said. "If our relations with Russia and China go sour," he said, "our exports could be reduced substantially."

Dr. Rudd, who heads the department of agricultural economics at the University of Kentucky, reviewed the study of agricultural potential in Kentucky released last week by the Governor's Commission on Agriculture.

Dr. Rudd predicted an increase in burley tobacco production, based on an announced 8 per cent increase in burley production quotas. "If we utilized all of the options available," Dr. Rudd said. "We could see as much as nearly 700 million pounds of burley produced next year, up very sharply from the 475 million pounds produced this year," he said.