

# BACKGROUND



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Issues Office

## AMERICAN FARMERS THRIVE UNDER BUSH, WHILE ARKANSAS FARMERS COME UP SHORT

PRESIDENT BUSH HAS VIGOROUSLY EXPANDED TRADE AND OPENED NEW MARKETS FOR AMERICA'S FARM PRODUCTS. THE AMERICAN FARM ECONOMY IS STRONG, YET CLINTON'S ARKANSAS IS TRAILING BEHIND.

**Farmers Better Under Bush:** Under President Bush's agriculture policies, the economic well-being of farmers has been notably enriched. President Bush signed a market-oriented 1990 Farm Bill which will keep U.S. farmers competitive in world markets, stabilize farm income, and provide voluntary incentives for farmers to protect the environment.

- o **Incomes Up, Debts Down:** In 1990, the net income of farmers reached a record level \$50 billion, while farm debt fell by nearly one-third between 1984 and 1991.
- o **Arkansas Lagging Behind:** Under Clinton, Arkansas' real net income for farmers grew a mere 4% from 1984 to 1987, one-sixth of the national growth rate. Clinton also raised 13 taxes and fees directly affecting farmers. The last thing we need is more taxes pushing up food prices.

**Fighting for America's Farmers:** President Bush has actively promoted the interests of the agricultural community in international trade talks; whether it be working to reduce the unfair agricultural subsidies of the European Community, expanding markets in the Far East, or negotiating a North American Free Trade Agreement to open Mexico's market of 90 million consumers. As a result, agricultural exports are up, topping \$37 billion in 1991, and are expected to reach \$41 billion this year.

**Good Intentions Gone Astray:** Clinton's running mate, Senator Gore, has questioned the need for pesticides, implying that their important functions can also be better served by "'natural' resistance to some crop diseases and predators..." (Earth in the Balance, p.322).

**Ethanol Programs Backed by Bush, Thwarted by Clinton:** President Bush extended tax incentives for domestically produced ethanol and signed into law the Clean Air Act of 1990, which provides new opportunities for ethanol. As governor, Clinton removed the motor fuel tax exemption on gasohol and said in a speech at Drexel University this spring that he supports "an executive order to purchase natural gas-powered vehicles for the federal fleet," making no mention of ethanol.

**Clinton Says Anything When it Comes to Wetlands:** In 1990, Clinton urged President Bush to relax the definition of wetlands. One year later, Clinton changed his position and criticized the Bush Administration for relaxing the definition for farmed and prior converted wetlands.

**Clinton Wiggles, Wobbles, and Wavers on his Farm Policy:** When one of Clinton's top advisors called for a total phase out of farm subsidies, Clinton quickly distanced himself saying, "You know that guy's not on my payroll." However, his economic plan did not mention farm supports, except to eliminate subsidies for honey producers. What agricultural product will he single out for attack next?