



Sustaining Life on the Land

Reflections on Rural Life

ACTION STEPS IN RESPONSE TO A FARM MARKET CRISIS

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Rural Life Commission developed a list of possible action steps in response to the downturn of livestock prices (especially in the hog market) which occurred in 1999. The following ideas were adapted from this plan.

EDUCATION

1. Coordinate with your diocesan rural life office possible educational strategies.
2. Prepare background paper on the farm market crisis impacting your parishioners and present it to parish committees and community leaders.
3. Prepare newspaper editorials and letters to the editor.
4. Coordinate public awareness efforts (press conferences, public forums) with your diocesan communication director.
5. Prepare articles for your Catholic newspaper.
6. Sponsor workshops to study *Life on the Land* statement.

SOCIAL SERVICE

1. Meet with your Catholic Social Services director to discuss possible counseling and supportive service programs for hurting farm families.
2. Set up a parish or diocesan based telephone hotline for emotional support and referral information.
3. Coordinate a food distribution plan which would distribute food through food pantries rather than go to waste due to low market prices and/or excess production. The Ohio Agricultural Surplus Production Alliance Program can help. Call 614-221-4336
4. Discuss with your diocesan rural life director possible financial support from your diocese.



PRAYER

1. Prepare petitions and homilies relating to food and land concerns. Refer to the prayer resources offered in the Resource Guide *Sustaining Life: Reflections on Rural Life*.
2. Participate in the *Green Ribbon Prayer Card Campaign* offered by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.
3. Sponsor days of Prayer and/or rural life liturgical celebrations in parishes.

ADVOCACY

1. Support appropriate legislation through letter writing campaigns and/or sponsoring listening sessions with your elected public officials. Your diocesan rural life director and the Catholic Conference of Ohio staff can provide direction and/or training.
2. Sponsor dialogue sessions with farmers, farm workers, and community leaders in order to build trust relationships and possible solutions.

ECONOMIC

1. Encourage and help in the formation of local farm cooperatives.
2. Learn how to access available public and private grants and/or loans.
3. Sponsor meetings with bankers and lenders to encourage programs, practices and policies which will help keep farmers farming.
4. Sponsor dialogue sessions which explore needed long-term changes in market structures. Consider using the Reflection Questions suggested by the Ohio Bishops in their letter, *Life on the Land*.
5. Build coalitions with farm/rural organizations