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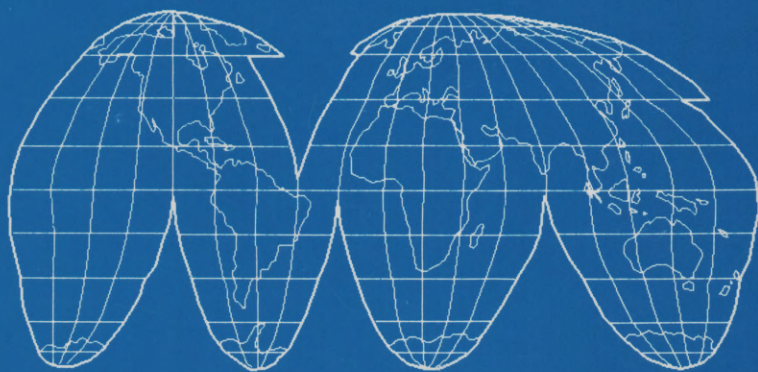
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Commodity Promotion Policy

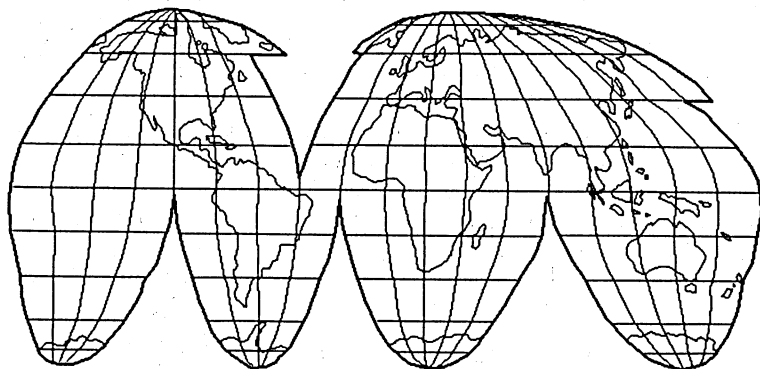


in a
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Commodity Promotion Policy



in a **Global Economy**

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PERSPECTIVES ON COMMODITY PROMOTION POLICY ISSUES: A FARMER'S VIEW

Barton W. Minor
California Prune Board

Agriculture still needs help. It is one of the only industries in which pure competition is possible. Anybody can enter agriculture, production cannot be controlled or planned and there are many relatively small entities that make up the whole. Agriculture needs support in order to insure, not only the survival of the farmers, but those who are directly supported or employed by farming and to insure consumers that their plums will continue to cost ten cents a pound, not \$2 a pound, and that prunes never cost \$4 per bag.

As a farmer, the increasing cost of inputs dictates my priorities: increasing the price I receive per ton/pound of product produced annually to cover the increased costs of production. I am not the only one affected. If I do not realize a profit, my employees do not work.

I sell raisins to SunMaid which receives Market Promotion Program (MPP) funds. SunMaid sells more raisins which lowers inventories and we can then charge, or negotiate, higher prices. This is good for us and good for the nation since it can use a little help in reducing the deficit. When someone criticizes providing SunMaid with MPP dollars, perhaps they don't stop to think that behind these big corporations are people like you and me.

Another product we market on our family farm is plums. When the marketing order for plums was first rescinded two years ago, plums were selling for \$20 per box. The market crashed and, after a second season, still has not recovered. This year it did not pay us to pick our plums. Who lost? Certainly we did, but what about the farm workers who did not have a picking job? And thanks to a decision that we do not need minimum grade and size standards because some fine small fruit would get culled out of the market, a lot of great fruit fell to the ground with the net result being the same tonnage made it to market.