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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**

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**1929 August 15**

**Silver Lake, NY - in re Recommendations of  
Governors' Agricultural Advisory Committee**

At Silver Lake, N. Y., August 15, 1929

*Discusses Recommendations of Agricultural Advisory Commission for Survey of Soil and Climatic Conditions Throughout the State*

It is appropriate in the center of one of the important agricultural areas of the State to lay down a part of the agricultural program for the coming year.

People will remember that on the initiation of the Governor's Agricultural Advisory Commission an important program of farm tax relief was put through at the last session of the Legislature. This was in the nature of an emergency program, the result of which could be made of immediate benefit to the farmers of the State. The relief from highway taxes, the reduction in grade crossing elimination contributions by the localities, and the increased state aid for small rural schools will save the agricultural taxpayers many millions of dollars every year from now on.

The same Agricultural Advisory Commission has again been in session, taking up this time one of the important steps for the all time improvement of agricultural production.

It is a fact not generally realized that the State does not know what its agricultural possibilities are. In other words, no complete survey has been made for the purpose of making definite plans for the more profitable use of each kind of land. There are dozens of different kinds of land in the State, and it is not stretching the point to say that a very large percentage of agricultural lands is now used for the production of the wrong kind of crop.

The commission proposes therefore that the first step must be to complete the soil survey of the State. For many years past cooperative work has been going on between the State and the Federal Government but it has resulted in the survey of less than half of the counties of the State. At the present rate of procedure it would require thirty years to finish the soil survey. It is therefore the first step in the program that this soil survey shall be speeded up so as to complete the whole State within the next few years. This will result in knowledge of the kind of soils in every county and every neighborhood and every farm, and will save millions of dollars during the lifetime of the coming generation. For example it is said that more than half of the orchards of Western New York are planted on the wrong kind of soil. If a knowledge of these soils had been available millions of dollars would have been saved the fruit growers of that part of the State.

With increasing specialization in crop growing it is essential to know what soil is best adapted to each crop.

With this soil survey there should go hand in hand a complete survey of the climatic conditions of the State and it is a fact little recognized that one county may have conditions of climate very different from an adjoining county, so different in fact that the effect on the same crop will be marked. This climatic survey applies not only to general crops but especially to orchards and vegetables.

Most people know of the great success of our State in growing fruits of all kinds, but it is less well known that in the last census year the vegetables produced on the farms of New York represented one-fourth of the total value of all farm crops and that the State led all other states.

The third step in the survey is to take an inventory of all of the forest resources of the State. While it is true that the State is consuming far more timber each year than it is growing it is also true that thousands of owners of wood lots are unable to obtain a dependable market for their forest crops. In other words we are losing at both ends—not growing enough timber, and at the same time not getting what we should for the timber which we have.

There has been much talk and some legislation on reforesting the waste lands of the State, but we have little detailed knowledge of where that land is, what its boundaries are, and what kind of trees should be planted on it for the best returns.

For the above reasons the Governor's Agricultural Advisory Commission feels very strongly that the next important step in the advancement of

agriculture in our State is to make a complete survey. This can not be done in one year, but the work can properly be started at the next session of the Legislature. For the first three years the total cost of the various projects will come to about \$110,000 a year. These projects fall into the following classes:

1. Completion of the soil survey including preparation of detailed maps.
2. Assembling and preparing complete weather data.
3. Classification of land for agriculture, forest, recreation or residential purposes.
4. Survey of the present uses and best adaptations of land including orchards, vegetables, forests, pastures.
5. Studying the cost of producing milk under the various existing systems of dairying.

I have long been interested in the general subject of city and of regional planning. The present proposed survey of the whole State is merely an intelligent broadening of the planning which heretofore has been localized. It is a study for a State wide plan which will include the use of every acre in the whole State. So far as I know this is the first time in the United States that the city or regional plan idea has been extended to take in a whole State. It will, therefore, be of great interest to everyone who realizes the importance of looking ahead and of using our resources to the best advantage.

I am particularly happy that the Governor's Agricultural Advisory Commission has looked at this big subject in such a broad-minded way. The survey which they propose and which I heartily endorse is necessary before we spend millions of dollars which might otherwise be wasted. It is a good businesslike proposition and will in the long run save the agricultural population and also the city dwelling population many millions of dollars through the more economical production of food crops and the increasing of our forest resources. I am confident that there will be virtually unanimous support for this excellent program from all parts of the State.