

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

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POLAND: Rural Solidarity

The government's agreement to an independent trade union for farmers is intended to be the kind of gesture of good will that Solidarity leader Lech Walesa called for in his recent interview on Polish national television. [REDACTED]

The move will be especially well received by the Church. The government hopes that the action will demonstrate its commitment to moderation and reform, reduce suspicions of Prime Minister Jaruzelski's intentions in seeking a strike ban, and ease the way for government-union talks. These talks were slated to begin Thursday but have not yet begun. [REDACTED]

By agreeing to the farmers' union outside the framework of its talks with Solidarity, the government may hope to minimize the links between the two unions and avoid allowing Solidarity to take credit for the farmers' union. Perhaps as important, the government probably believes that it would help production to agree to the new union before spring farmwork is in full swing. [REDACTED]

Many in Solidarity will view the concession as a long-overdue step and may not be inclined to give the government much credit. The fact that the government responded only after farmers began another sit-in may confirm the belief of some union activists that the government acts only under pressure. [REDACTED]

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