



Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919-1981 (American Politics and Political Economy Series)

John Mark Hansen

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Through a comprehensive analysis of American agricultural politics in the past half-century, *Gaining Access* shows when, how, and why interest groups gain and lose influence in the policy deliberations of the United States Congress. By consulting with policy advocates, John Mark Hansen argues, lawmakers offset their uncertainty about the policy stands that will bolster or impede their prospects for reelection. The advocates provide legislators with electoral intelligence in Washington and supportive propaganda at home, earning serious consideration of their policy views in return. From among a multitude of such informants, representatives must choose those they will most closely consult.

With evidence from congressional hearings, personal interviews, oral histories, farm and trade journals, and newspapers, Hansen traces the evolution of farm lobby access in Congress. He chronicles the rise and fall of the American Farm Bureau, the surge and decline of party politics, the incorporation of the commodity lobbies, the exclusion of the consumer lobbies, and the accommodation of urban interests in food stamps.

Brilliantly combining insights from rational choice theory with historical data, *Gaining Access* is an essential guide for anyone interested in the dynamics of interest group influence.

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