Farm-City Week To Combat Many Myths Believed By City Folks

City residents generally are handicapped by lack of information about farming and food prices, a situation that has created the circulation of many "myths" concerning agriculture, according to Leon Falk Jr., prominent Pittsburgh philanthropist and livestock breeder. He is an honorary chairman for Pennsylvania observance of Farm-City Week Nov. 20 26 and president of Pennsylvania Livestock and Allied Industries, Inc.

The purpose of Farm-City Week is to bring farm and city people together to create better understanding between farmers and their city cousins — industrial workers, businessmen and other consumers of farm products," Falk said.

"No matter which side of the fence a citizen is on, myths about farming are a menace," he quoted from a recent statement by the agricultural committee of the National Planning Association. "We all need to try to clear away some misconceptions, prejudices, and plain hogwash," the committee declared.

Falk said the report vividly illustrates the importance of city people understanding the farm point of view and vice versa.

He called attention to and refuted four of a dozen farm myths that city residents are likely to believe.

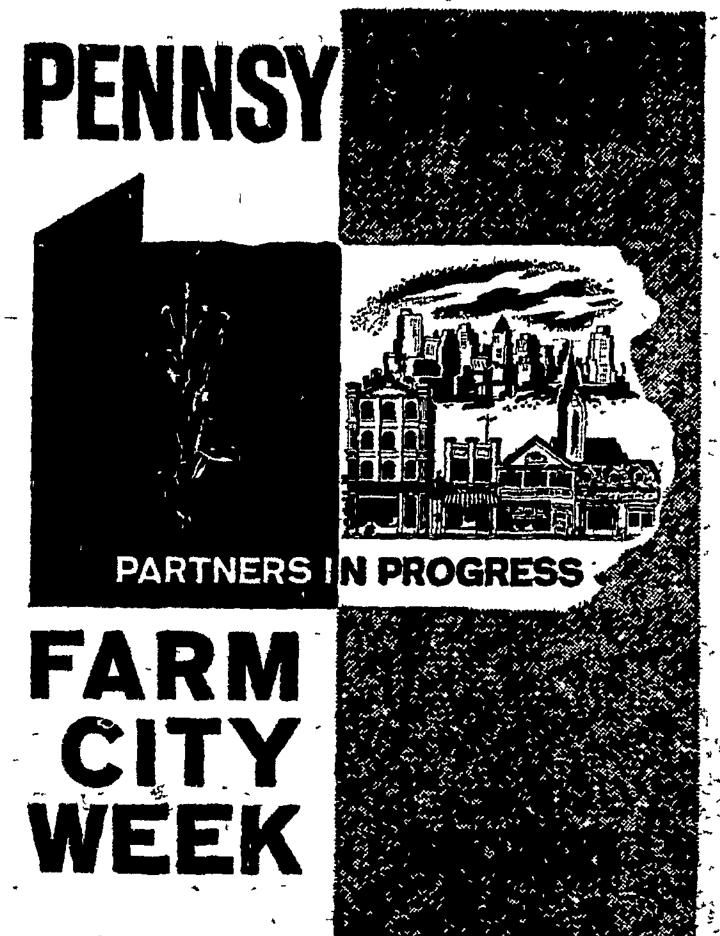
Myth No. 1 — "If farmers were as efficient as city workers they wouldn't be in trouble." The answer to that myth comes from the U. S. Bureau of the Census in its annual report on the labor force dated 1957. The average farm worker that year put in 46.6 hours per week while the average person at work in non-agriculture worked 40.5 hours per week. Taking the output per man hour in 1947 at 100, the agriculture output in 1948 was 123.7 and in manufacturing, 104.6. By 1958 it was 183.4 for agriculture and 141.9 in manufacturing. This was a substantial gain in efficiency of farm workers over city workers.

Myth No. 2—"Farm price supports are causing the increase in the cost of living." When considering retail food prices, consumers should remember that the farmer is getting only 39 cents out of each dollar the consumer pays. In the six years ending in June, 1958, the national consumer price index rose nine points on all food items while the index of prices received by farmers dropped three points. Farm product prices apparently acted as a brake on the rise in the cost of living.

Myth No. 3 — "Farm subsidy programs are keeping people on farms who ought to be getting out of farming and into city jobs." In 1920 the nation's farm population was 31.9 million. By 1957 it had dropped to 20.4 million, most of the decline coming since 1940 or during the period of big farm programs. Young people especially have been and are leaving the farm in unprecedented numbers.

Myth No. 4 — "Farmers have an advantage over non-farm people because of government aid to agriculture." It hasn't worked out this way. Two years ago, for instance, farm people made up nearly 12 per cent of the population but they got less than 6 per cent of the national income. With all government aid—and Pennsylvania farmers get a very small portion—the average net income of farm people in 1951 was $983 while the average for non-farm workers was $17 Six years later, in 1957 annual net income from ming had dropped to $ while the non-farm aver advanced to $2,062.

Falk said there are m other "myths" about agri ture which could well be plained, but Farm-City W permits calling attention t few as an example for need for better understa ing.



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(From page 1)

R2; Lois Overgaard, La R4; Mary Heisey, Sheri R1; Evelyn Esbenshade, Joy R2; Helen Musser, Joy R2; Mary Ann Muss Manheim R1; Patty Muss Columbia R2; Keith Ov gaard, Lanc., R4; Glenn ter, Washington Boro Darvin Boyd, Ephrata Wilbur Hosler, Manheim Janice Showalter, Reinho R1; and Judy Nolt, Lanc er R1.

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