

Varied Outlook Given By Local, College Men

The agriculture outlook for 1962 presented a varied picture to the forecasters Monday night.

A panel of local and university experts took a look at the farm situation and came up with some pretty encouraging predictions for certain segments of the farm community and some rather gloomy forecasts for others.

If the forecasters are correct, 1962 should be a pretty good year for cattle, grains, hogs and sheep, and a pretty poor year for dairy, poultry and eggs.

Leading the discussion at the 1962 Outlook Conference sponsored by the Lancaster County Extension Service, William Johnstone, extension Agriculture Economist from the Penna. State University said, "The growth of the national economy adds up to a fairly good demand for food and fibre in 1962" he said. Consumer expenditures are up as are government expenditures and unemployment is on the downgrade. This coupled with inventory buildups by businesses has pushed the gross national product (total for goods and services) to an

all time high. While population has gone up and total disposable income has gone up, the farmer has continued to receive a smaller portion of the expenditures for food. However, he said, with the present growth factors, economists expect farmers to be in about as favorable a position in 1962 as they were in the latter part of last year.

Dairy Picture Bleak
The one discouraging spot pointed out by Johnstone was in the dairy industry. "I see very little in the picture that can change either output or demand in 1962" he said. There is little to signal any improvement in price, and in fact there may be some reductions in the first half of the year.

Charles Cowan, local representative for the Interstate Milk Producers Cooperative agreed in principle with Johnstone. "Dealers are not driving the roads looking for new producers" he said. Production is still increasing and "Interstate" is look-

ing for markets to handle milk which present dealers won't take. "In spite of efforts to cut back production, we are anticipating a spring flush of milk." Cowan said.

Cowan said milk producers in Pennsylvania had a production-limiting program as long ago as 1920. "That is the only way we fluid (milk) folks can survive here in the east." He said Lancaster County dairymen later went into seasonal pricing to limit production, and, "it has done a very good job."

Meat Situation Steady
Robert Heilbron of Samuel Heilbron and sons, commission buyers at the Lancaster Union Stockyards said he looks for cattle prices to be a little lower during the spring months of 1962 than they were last year, but he does not expect summer prices to dip as low. "I look for good runs of cattle through February and possibly into April" he said. Lower grades and poorly finished cattle will suffer most during the coming year, he said.

Louis Moore, extension Agriculture Economist from PSU added that competition from greater supplies of pork and other competing meats, especially poultry, would not cut into the beef market substantially as long as wages and employment remain at a high level. He

said per capita consumption of beef is at an all time high and is still on the increase.

Pork will be somewhat lower than last year, but not substantially lower, he said. Hog numbers have not built up to disastrous proportions in spite of the favorable position of hog prices for several years.

Lamb prices will probably go higher, Moore believes, because low prices during the past few years have forced the liquidation of many ewe flocks. Most of this increase will come before mid-year, he said.

Grain Program Praise
Wilbur Heistand, Salunga feed manufacturer, had high praise for the action of the Secretary of Agriculture in his handling of surplus grain stocks.

"Freeman has done a tremendous job of reducing grain stocks", he said.


Corn price at harvest time was low but it

did not come within 5 cents per bushel of the low of last year and the high of just a few days ago was four cents higher than last year's high.

"The secretary has the power to sell government-owned corn at market price but he has been very cautious not to cause a breakdown of the market by dumping corn," Heistand said.

Moore echoed this sentiment when he said stocks of carryover grain by the federal government declined for the first time since 1952. Supplies of stored grains ran from about 20 billion tons in 1952 to approximately 8 billion tons in 1961. The carryover this year has been reduced by about five billion tons, even with the high yields recorded by grain farmers during the 1961 growing season.

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