

## Machine Solves Problems For Pennsylvania Dairy Farmer

In 1958, John Gehman, a Pennsylvania dairyman, probably became the first man in the world to seek, through the Agricultural Extension Service, use of the 'electronic brain' for solving a farm management problem, according to R. J. Becker, Farm Management Specialist, The Pennsylvania State University.



Farm management specialist R. J. Becker (center) holds punched paper tape on which computer has communicated solutions to farm problem of dairyman John Gehman (right, with wife). Gehman said, "Your machine was right."

for Gehman to spend more time milking and managing cows by reducing the time he spent growing feed crops?

Results of computer solutions over the following years have borne out in practice what Deppen guessed was possible. Gehman has doubled his herd to 120 cows, installed a new milking system and uses a different method of cropping. He said, "Your machine was right."

Deppen warned Gehman that the experiment might not work. Gehman's response was that whatever answer the machine gave he would still make up his own mind.

Another possible world first: In December 1963, Paul Ballet, a Northampton county farmer, reported a farm problem to a computer my mail. His problem arrived at the University on a questionnaire form in his own handwriting. He and Sam Lewis, his county agent, had filled it out together.

"We are experimenting to find the quickest possible means of answering a farm problem," Becker says.

Using a questionnaire is something new. The farmer, with the help of his county agent, would fill it out and mail it to the University. The computer then provides the answer which is usually a series of alternative solutions. This information would go

back to the farmer by way of the county agent who then would discuss the alternatives with him.

As this program develops, county agents will receive training and become equipped to function in this special area of computer applications. The most important responsibility of the county agent, Becker emphasizes, is to recognize and secure the vital information. The new questionnaire will help the county agent collect the necessary data.

Dairy herd data from over 6,000 participating farmers goes through electronic computers at the University which report the dairy practices of the farmers and the results achieved. This information is used as part of an educational program to guide dairymen in the improvement of herd management on the dairy farms of Pennsylvania. Similar recordkeeping and analysis systems are in view for poultry, swine and other farm enterprises.

## Local Man Joins National Breeding Firm

Ray R. Harbold of Elizabethtown, Pa. has been assigned to the Lower Dauphin County and Upper Lancaster County area as herd technician for Curtiss Breeding Service.

He will work with Clifford Gibble under Pere L. Wickes, of Lebanon, Pa. local distributor for the nation-wide artificial breeding firm, in making the services of 165 sires of 14 dairy, beef and dual-purpose breeds available to cattle raisers.

Harbold qualified for the post through successful completion of an intensive two-week training course at the Curtiss headquarters farm in Cary, Illinois.

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