

Ord Questions Pa. Dept. of Ag Trends

Concern was expressed this week by an agricultural organization leader about the present program trends of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and its "people oriented" programs which do not include farmers.

Charles R. Ord, administrative secretary of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA) made these observations in his annual report at the farm group's 21st convention being held at the Penn Harris Motor Inn.

"We are concerned with the direction the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is taking," Ord told the voting delegate session this morning. "No longer do we hear discussions about agricultural

problems; research needed to fill future needs; and plans to meet agricultural responsibilities five, seven or ten years hence.

"Instead we are told the Department is tuned to 'people oriented' programs, which is not bad if the people oriented programs include farmers — but they do not. The farmer is not among them," Ord stated.

Taking issue with some of the recent spending of department funds to institute rural hospital care, the farm leader stated that PFA was not against welfare, hospitalization and health programs for rural areas.

He did question the need for duplication of effort by two government departments: "Should PFA be for duplication

of welfare department efforts by the Department of Agriculture? Will the Agriculture Department be able to buy more facilities, more patient care, produce more jobs and job opportunities with your tax dollar than the designated department legislatively assigned this responsibility?"

Ord continued, "Ask your city cousin what he knows about agriculture and nine out of ten will answer NOT MUCH, except that farmers have it made with all those subsidy checks rolling in!" the PFA executive head asserted. "The addition of non-farm welfare program to the Agriculture Department budget will eventually be added to the enormous burden of subsidies

already charged to us but not received by farmers.

"To date we see little evidence that problems such as meat inspection are being given priority consideration. Over the past three years Pennsylvania has reduced its local slaughter operations and route delivery systems, many of which were farmer owned and operated, from more than 1,100 to less than 600," Ord said.

"Adding to the confusion created by the new direction coming from the department, is its open disdain for the College of Agriculture of Pennsylvania State University

"Our experience indicates that while we don't always agree with

educators or some of their ideas as how best to solve an operational problem, we do find they have a useful and in fact necessary function to perform. We fear the new direction does not recognize the importance of PSU's College of Agriculture as it relates to the Department's responsibility to the agricultural community," concluded Ord.

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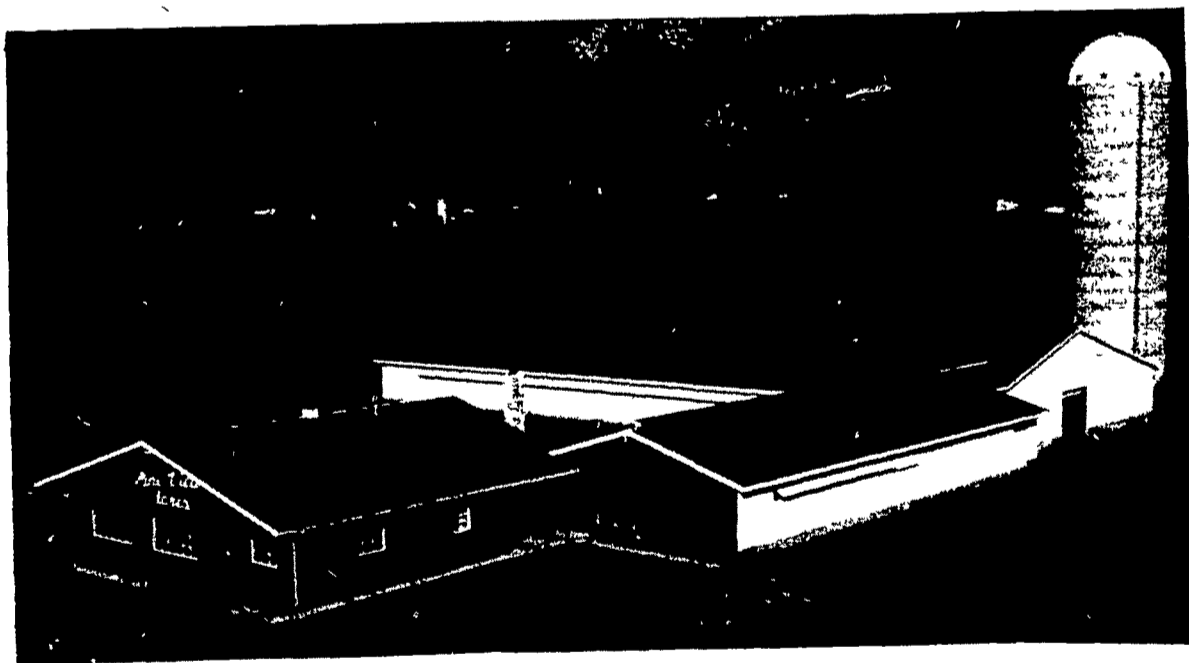
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