

## Unemployment Aid: Any Boon to Farmers?

Circle the right answer: The extension of unemployment protection to farmworkers would mean (higher costs, lower costs) for farm employers.

That was a trick question. You should have circled both answers to be absolutely correct, according to a study by the U.S. Department of Labor.

The study showed that if unemployment protection were extended to farmworkers, the tax may result in higher production costs in the short run, which could encourage employers to use their workers more efficiently and so cut costs in the long run.

At present the "covered" employer pays a net Federal tax of 0.5 percent (\$21) of the first \$4,200 of the wages paid to each worker.

The study also claims that with unemployment insurance coverage the farmer might be able to compete more effectively with other employers for more qualified employees.

Strict rules cover those now eligible for benefits. To receive compensation a worker must be unemployed through no fault of his own; he must have worked long enough in that year to be considered a substantial part of the labor force; and he must be willing and able to work.

In many States the worker must demonstrate his availability by actively seeking work. He is subject to disqualification if he refuses a job which the agency determines is suitable for him.

The same rules would probably hold true if the insurance is extended to farmworkers.

Farmworkers brought under any insurance program would probably be required to register with State or Federal agencies, a step that would increase the opportunity of matching workers and jobs.

One example is the Annual Worker Plan of the Department of Labor. It attempts to provide

employers with a dependable seasonal labor force and to offer migratory workers as much employment as possible.

Another plan is "job banks," where the aim is to match jobs with workers. Many local offices of State employment security agencies have such banks. A computer listing of available jobs is provided daily within the geographic area covered by the program. A number of States have adopted this approach on a Statewide basis.

Farm employers, by having specific job vacancies placed on this listing, would have a more easily accessible supply of farmworkers who might qualify for the specific job vacancy.

Continuing mechanization and improved production techniques in agriculture dictate the need for an increasingly skilled farm work force.

With the extension of unemployment insurance, farmworkers would have greater accessibility to State and Federal programs designed to upgrade their skills. Farm employers, by identifying their needed manpower skills, may have training programs established.

Graduates of these programs would not only meet the growing need for a more highly skilled farm labor force, but would also assure that they are placed in more stable employment.

### Roller Cookie Tips

To aid the process of rolling out cookie dough for cutting, Mrs. Ruth Buck, Extension foods and nutrition specialist at The Pennsylvania State University, says that chilling the dough will help. A pastry cloth, lightly sprinkled with flour and a stockinette rolling pin cover will help prevent the dough from sticking. Dip your cookie cutters in flour before pressing them into the dough. And when you reroll the trimmings, lay them together with the edges slightly overlapping and press with a rolling pin. Wadding them together before rerolling will toughen cookies.

## Potato Production Decreased in State

Pennsylvania's potato production is down sharply this year, reflecting heavily the ravages of tropical storm Agnes, the state Department of Agriculture said.

Latest estimates place the crop at 555,000,000 pounds, down 29 per cent from one year ago when potatoes here yielded 815.5 million pounds.

Total acres planted dropped this year by 5,500 acres and the yield per acre, at 18,500 pounds was a reduction of 3,500 pounds per acre from 1971.

Pennsylvania is ranked 12th in the U.S. in potato production, with the value of last year's crop placed at \$22 million. Lehigh, Erie and Cambria counties account for 30 per cent of the state's total.

Lancaster County is seventh in

potato production, but fifth in value in the state. The highest yields per acre usually harvested here with 27,500 pounds per acre in 1971.

The value of potatoes in Lancaster county last year was \$1,454,000.

One farmer commented that while potato production in the state could eventually be reflected in higher prices at the store, the shortage of the potato crop would be felt most in potato chip production.

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