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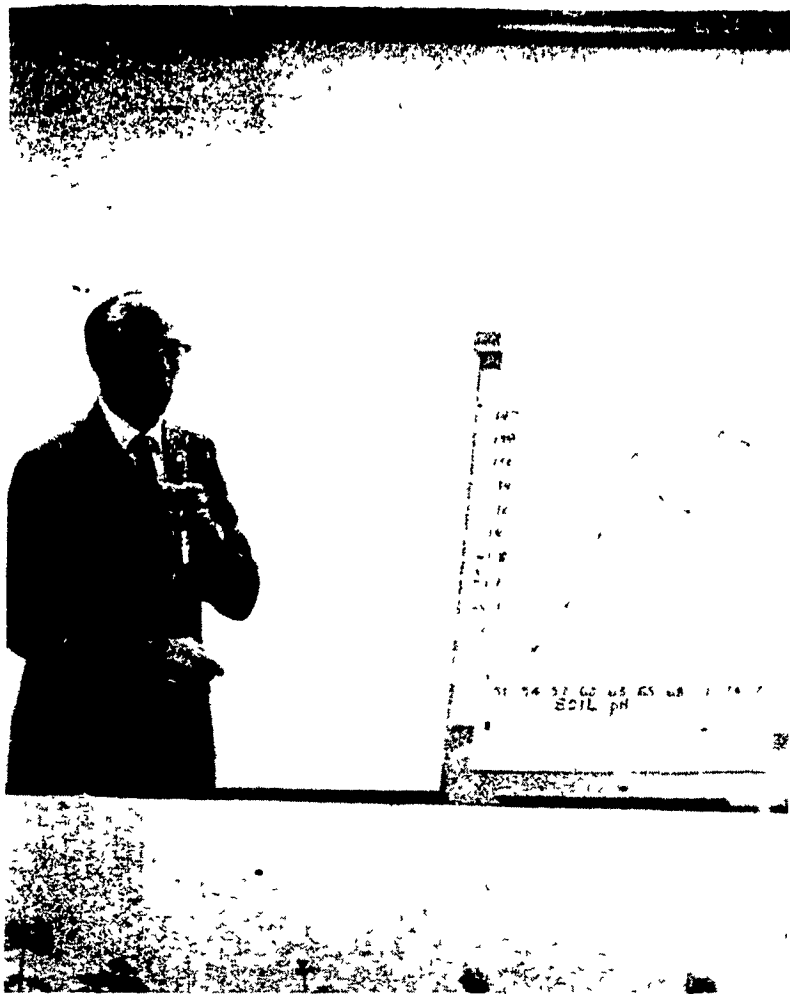
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Lancaster Farming

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Joe McGahen, Penn State extension agronomist, told a crowd at Tuesday's annual Crops and Soils Day that Lancaster County corn yields could be increased with better management practices.

Crops & Soils Crowd Told . . .

County Corn Yield Should Be Higher

"Class one soils, like the kind you have in Lancaster County, are capable of producing over 150 bushels of corn per acre. Yet, farmers with class one soil who participated in the state's Five Acre Corn Club produced only an average 137 bushels to the acre," Joe H. McGahen, Penn State extension agronomist, told a group at Tuesday's annual Crops and Soils Day in the Farm and Home Center.

McGahen went on to say that the 137-bushel yield was only five bushels more than that produced by farmers with class two soils. The difference between class one and two soils is theoretically much greater than five bushels.

McGahen said farmers with good soils apparently don't manage them as well as they could, and offered some advice on improving yields. He noted that some of the highest corn yields in the Five Acre Club were reported by farmers who planted corn after tobacco and potatoes. Yields following tobacco average 165 bushels to the acre and 167 bushels after potatoes.

"You know why you get so much corn after tobacco or potatoes? Because those are the two crops you fertilize the heaviest," the scientist said. "If you want outstanding corn yields consistently, you have to fertilize the land."

Fertilizer alone, though, won't do the whole job in increasing yields, McGahen pointed out. Other management practices can

have important effects on corn production. Row spacing is one of them. "In the Corn Club, farmers with 40-inch rows have an average yield of 129 bushels. Those with 30-inch rows are getting 143 bushels to the acre," he said.

Soil pH was another factor that could hurt yields. McGahen used charts to demonstrate the fact that soil pH of 6.3 to 7.1 was best for corn. Beyond these limits, yields fell drastically.

Corn Club figures showed that corn planted in plowed down alfalfa yielded an average 137 bushels to the acre. This was better than planting after an alfalfa-grass mixture for 134 bushels, or planting after grass alone for 130 bushels.

There were some practices, however, that didn't seem to have much effect at all on yield. "Last year in the Corn Club, we had 518

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, February 24

6 p.m. - Benefit Banquet, Menonite Central Committee, Twin Valley High School, Morgantown.

Monday, February 26

7:30 p.m. - Manheim FFA Alumni Association Organizational meeting, vo-ag classroom, Manheim Central High School.

7:30 p.m. - Lancaster County Swine Producers Educational meeting, Farm and Home

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Tobacco Hits 52¢, Crop is Sold Out

Tobacco buyers said the magic words this week, and local farmers opened the doors on their tobacco sheds. The magic words were "fifty cents a pound."

This year, for a number of reasons, the tobacco crop remained unsold for an unusually long time after harvest. Until the beginning of this week, perhaps as little as a quarter of the crop had been sold. By Friday morning, less than a fifth of the crop remained in the hands of farmers, and one observer said he expected virtually all of the crop would be sold by Friday evening.

Early in the week, buyers began offering 50 cents a pound to growers. Offers had hovered around the 40 to 45 cent range for many weeks, with very few takers. Farmers seemed to have a firm intention to hold out for 50 cents. No organized selling resistance was evident, but growers shared a general feeling of when they were going to sell.

By week's end, the resistance had pushed prices up to 52 cents for graded tobacco and 51 cents for straight strip. News of these prices is bound to be a disappointment to the few growers who sold early, some in the 35 to 40 cent range.

This year's crop has generally been considered of poor quality. However, some observers have said that the quality of the tobacco, now that it's stripped and baled, doesn't look as bad as

had been expected.

The record prices have brought cheer to many of the local growers, and there has been some speculation that tobacco acreage in the county might increase somewhat next year. One buyer, however, said that he thought the farmers who sold early might be bitter enough to forget entirely about tobacco, thereby offsetting any increases by their neighbors.

The Lancaster County tobacco market is a phenomenon influenced by many things, one of which is definitely not logic. "I don't think you can continue to have a strong market for any commodity unless that market is

geared to gradations of quality and equitable payments for top

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New Feature Sale Reports

This week begins a new LANCASTER FARMING feature. On page 9, you'll see a report on public auctions of special interest to area farmers. Look for similar reports along with the sales register in future issues.

Inter-State Co-op Holds Annual Meet

Hundreds of Inter-State Milk Producers Coop members covered on Hostetters Banquet Hall in Mount Joy on Thursday for the annual District 7 dinner meeting.

Inter-State president Lester C. Jones talked to the group about the importance of letting lawmakers know the dairymen's views about milk prices and the rising costs of production.

Jones expressed his disappointment at the failure of the

Pennsylvania milk referendum. He said that a voluntary promotion program has increased Class 1 usage in federal order market 4, but the program could be much more effective if all producers were required to chip into the promotion fund.

Service to members was a topic Jones touched on during his speech, and he said one of the coop's innovations in New Jersey may be tried in Pennsylvania.

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New officers were elected during the annual Inter-State Milk Producers Coop meeting on Thursday. Among them were the four local presidents shown here. They

are, left to right; Robert Mylin, West Lampeter local; David McMichael, Millersville local; Ray Bollinger, Lititz local, and John Groff, Donegal local.