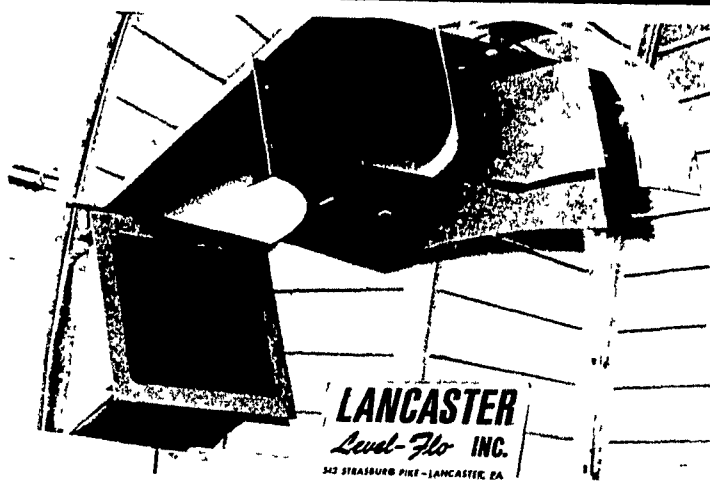


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**Farmers Not on Easy Street, Maryland Extensionist Says**

News stories that pit the farmer and the consumer in opposing roles are misleading, and yet they continue in the wake of the April meat boycott, according to Dr. Robert E. Wagner, director of the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Maryland in College Park.

In a recent release to one of the leading newspapers in Washington, D.C., a nationally syndicated columnist wrote of the problems facing American farmers. The writer pointed out that "the typical American stares at the latest horrible figures on the upsurge of food prices and cost of living and angrily envisions the U. S. farmer sitting on his porch, watching the spring planting season arrive and rocking his way to easy street."

This is a misleading picture of both consumers and farmers, says Wagner. Equally misleading is the statement that the farmer is getting the "lion's share" of the market basket.

Last year, according to the writer's figures, a farmer received \$521 of the \$1,311 retail

price of the market basket purchased by the typical American family. This figure applied only to farm-originated food items.

In pointing out what does happen to the money spent on farm-originated food, Wagner used a \$10 market basket as an example. "If you could purchase a market basket of farm-originated food items for \$10, you would be paying \$5.55 for processing, packaging, transporting and marketing."

"Out of his balance of \$4.45, the farmer pays \$3.36 for production costs, which include the cost of seed, fertilizer, pesticides, machinery gas, oil, repairs, hired labor, electricity, insurance, etc."

"Of the \$10 for the original purchase, a farmer receives \$1.09 for his labor, management and executive abilities, and his investment. This, in effect, is his gross salary; it is what he has left for taxes, medical expense, food, clothing, education, etc."

Average farm income in the U.S. is 17.1 percent less than the income of a nonfarm family. Wagner pointed out that this means an average family of four people on the farm is expected to face the same price increases with an income that is \$2,632 below the income of a nonfarm family.

"I'm not saying that the farmer is down and out financially—though some are—not that he

wants sympathy," Wagner stated. "What I am saying is that the American farmer has done a job for you and me unequalled anywhere in the world."

"The farmer has met the demands exerted by rising costs, population growth and expanding urban development crowding in on farmland, by producing ever-increasing amounts of food on the same acreage."

"Where else in our economic system, declared the Maryland Extension administrator, can we find such a high order of efficiency? It is a great American success story. It is fantastic that the farmer should require so little for his share, especially when his contribution to the whole food chain is so critical."

**Beef Club Sets New Meeting Time**

The New Holland 4-H Baby Beef Club met Monday night at the Robert Martin farm, New Holland RD1.

After the regular business meeting was held, movies on farming from New Holland Machine Company were shown.

The next meeting will be at 8 p.m. (new time) June 18 at the Mark Yoder farm, Elverson RD1.

Bill Hughes  
News Reporter



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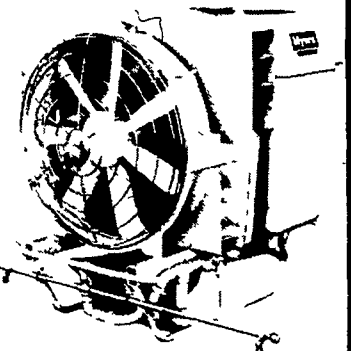
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