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FARM TRENDS

A summary of market and commodity news for the week ending July 21 by Dick Wanner

Railroads - A Real Crisis

It would cost Pennsylvania farmers \$400 million dollars more a year to farm if the Northeastern railroads go out of business. And if they don't get some relief from Washington, the railroads, Penn Central among them, say they won't be running trains after the first of the year. Biggest impact on farmers would be in feed costs. Railroad men and state transportation officials say the best thing to do is to keep pressure on Congressmen to get some kind of government help for rail transportation. Would be in keeping with past government funding of port facilities, airports and the interstate highway system. Further details in page one story.

Hogs - Would You Believe 65 Cents?

Hogs this week were going for 55 cents a pound and more, both here and at Midwestern hog markets. Some hog experts see prices remaining high for the next year or even longer. Nationally, supplies are short. When Washington first attempted to put brakes on the economy, many farmers sent pregnant sows to the packing houses, resulting in a dwindling supply of feeder pigs. It'll take at least six months to a year for production to begin catching up with demand. Consumer resistance is expected to develop when pork prices get up to the \$2-a-pound level, but even this may not materialize. Beef's going to be just as expensive, eggs may be going for \$1.50 a dozen in retail stores and poultry prices are getting stronger, too.

Cattlemen Fighting Phase 4

With the ceiling on retail beef prices set to last through September 12, packers around the country were complaining loudly to Washington. They said beef shortages were imminent, black marketeering was a genuine threat and plants were going to shut down. Live cattle prices remained strong, hovering around the \$53.00 level, with many packers buying animals they knew they were going to slaughter at a loss. Most packers are buying only enough to keep their plants in operation. After September 12, retail prices will certainly skyrocket, and live prices may go even higher.

Eggs - Higher and Higher

Last week in this column, we said egg prices were headed for the dollar-a-dozen mark. That could be a little low, with some crystal ball gazers predicting \$1.50 in the near future.

Crops - A Good Year in the Offing

Kansas and Oklahoma wheat fields are yielding a bounty

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Rail Leaders Tell Feedmen. . .

Railroads Could Close by Jan. 1

"If taxes on railroad users were spent the same way taxes on highway users are spent, we wouldn't have a railroad crisis," E. L. Tennyson told a meeting in Wilkes-Barre on Wednesday night. "The gross receipts tax on rail freight revenues, and the rail capital equipment tax generate about \$23 million annually for the Pennsylvania treasury. If that money went back to the railroads for track maintenance and other expenses, the railroads wouldn't be in trouble today."

Tennyson is the deputy secretary for local and area transportation in the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

He was addressing a group of mostly feed dealers who are members of PennAg Industries Association. PennAg had called the meeting to bring together railroad leaders and feedmen, to shed some light on the problems of rail transportation.

Other speakers at the meeting were: Richard H. George, vice-president for traffic for the Delaware & Hudson Railroad, Albany; C. P. O'Rourke, vice-

president for traffic at the Lehigh Valley Railroad, Bethlehem; J. R. Sullivan, senior assistant vice-president for planning and coordination at Penn Central; and Merle A. Forst, director of the PUC's bureau of transportation. The meeting was chaired by Paul Smith, traffic manager of the Lancaster feed firm of John W. Eshelman and Sons.

Tennyson pointed out that gasoline taxes paid by highway users must go into highway maintenance. This is not the case, though, with taxes levied on railroad users. Tennyson also said that if Pennsylvania agriculture had to depend totally on trucks, the industry's transportation bill would increase by some \$400 million annually. He commented that it would be lots cheaper to find some way of maintaining a viable rail system.

If relief from Washington is not forthcoming by October 1, there will be almost no rail service in the Northeast, according to the (Continued On Page 27)

Crowd Views Conservation Day Contests

The dirt was flying near Elizabethtown Tuesday as a record number of contestants vied for plowing trophies at Lancaster County's annual Conservation Field Day.

Eleven county farmers pulled scores of plow blades through the farm of Roger Thome, Elizabethtown RD3, resulting in three entries for the state competition to be held at this year's Pennsylvania Ag Progress Days, Aug. 28-30 at the Milton Hershey School Farms, Hershey.

Winning the plowing events were Harvey Sauder, New Holland RD1, in the contour plowing contest, and Merle Groff,

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Paul Smith, chairman of PennAg's Wilkes-Barre rail meeting.

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Dairy Shows Held At Guernsey Barn

This was a busy week at the Guernsey Sales Barn, with the Lancaster County 4-H Dairy Show on Tuesday and Wednesday, followed by the Lancaster District Holstein Show on Thursday.

The colored breeds started the ball rolling on Tuesday, with a total of 41 Guernseys competing for ribbons. The grand champion of the breed, as well as the senior champion, was a four-year-old cow owned by Marlin M. Stoltzfus, Ronks. Stoltzfus also took champion senior showman honors in Guernsey competition.

Junior breed champion Guernsey honors went to Mary Kirk, who exhibited a senior yearling. The junior champion showman was Carol Balmer, Lititz, and the reserve champion

senior showman was Mark Witmer, Willow Street.

Altogether, there were five reserve prizes awarded in Guernsey competition, and one young lady in her first year of exhibiting walked away with four of them. Connie Balmer, Lititz, took reserve champion honors for junior breed, senior breed and junior showman in addition to the reserve grand champion ribbon.

In Jersey competition, 14 cows competed for the ten ribbons awarded to the breed. A senior yearling owned by Barbara Jeanne Aaron, Quarryville, captured three awards, junior breed champion, reserve grand champion and reserve junior showman. The grand champion, and senior champion, was a four-

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Lancaster Farming Photo

Linda Witmer, left, was named senior showmanship champion at the Lancaster

County 4-H Dairy Show this week. Rhoda Stauffer, left, took reserve honors.