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# Lancaster Farming

Vol. 18 No. 38

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, August 11, 1973

\$2.00 Per Year

## FARM TRENDS

A summary of market and commodity news for the past week

by Dick Wanner

### Feed Grains - USDA Goofs

Government projections earlier in the year had shown an expected corn crop of some 5.8 billion bushels, and Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz was confidently looking forward to a 6 billion-bushel crop. Skeptics had doubted these estimates from the beginning, and they won their point Thursday when Washington released the latest crop report. The latest corn projection is for 5.66 billion bushels. Also down are soybeans, wheat, oats, barley and cottonseed meal expectations. An increase in sorghum production was the only bright spot in the feed grain picture, but it won't nearly make up for the lowered supplies in other grains.

### Washington Says No Export Controls

Will the administration impose controls on the exports of wheat and corn in an effort to alleviate feed shortages in the U.S.? "No," said Secretary Butz this week at a meeting with newsmen in the nation's capitol. Export controls on soybeans are termed a joke by some insiders. Exporters are allowed to send only half the quantity ordered. So, in order to get what they want, buyers have been doubling their requests.

### Livestock Markets - How High Is Up?

Hogs and beef animals continued their climb to new highs this week on local auction markets. Live steer prices topped 60-cents a pound at Lancaster, in spite of the September 12 price freeze. Only beef not under the freeze is that sold directly to consumers by farmers, according to the Philadelphia office of the Internal Revenue Service.

### Food - In Short Supply Everywhere

Canada, Australia and New Zealand are expanding food production as never before in an effort to capitalize on the booming export markets for grains and meat products. A New York Times report this week said that industrialized countries like the U.S., Japan and Western European nations are paying through the nose for past "cheap food" policies. Americans may be faced with the prospect of trying to keep pantries at home filled while at the same time trying to protect our corner of the world food market.

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## Conservationists From 12 Northeastern States Hold Lancaster Meet

More than 500 conservationists descended on Lancaster's Hilton Inn this week to attend a 12-state northeast area meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts. The group meets annually at various places throughout the Northeast to discuss environmental issues.

This year's meeting centered around state land use planning, rural development, soil and water research, youth in the conservation movement, non-point pollution controls and broad policy areas of the Environmental Protection Agency and other Washington agencies.

Activities began Sunday afternoon with tours of the Ephrata Cloisters, Pennsylvania Farm Museum and local conservation sites. Monday was given over to speeches by a number of state and local officials in addition to conservationists from around the country. Also on Monday, there were forums on five areas challenging conservation efforts today.

Each forum consisted of two dozen or more participants, a

speaker, a moderator and a recorder. Topics covered were land use planning, rural development, non-point pollution control, challenges in soil and water research and controlling shore erosion. On Tuesday, these forums were recapped at a general meeting.

"State governments can not implement land use plans, but they can and should provide leadership in this area," Robert Graf said in summing up the forum on land use planning. Graf is president of the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts.

Graf noted that the impetus for good land use must come from local citizens, but the states can

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## Co. Winners Named in Pa. 4-H Competition

Lancaster County sent 27 4-H'ers to Penn State this week to participate in the annual State 4-H Days. They competed with some 1200 other boys and girls from throughout the Commonwealth in judging demonstrations, public speaking and consumer education events.

County teams placed first in both senior and junior livestock judging. The senior judging team consisted of Jeff Grieder, Columbia, Ed and Richard Ness, Strasburg, and Joe Lefever, Manheim.

In the junior event, Manheim's Steve Donough led his team to victory by placing first in the state. Other team members were Ronald Kreider and Kevin Rohrer, also from Manheim, and Dwight Houser, Lampeter.

This year's horse judging team placed third in the state. Team

members were Randy Glick, Leola, Jane Gregory and Natalie Immel, Lititz, and Karen Ressler, Elizabethtown.

A consumer team captured a blue ribbon and a gold medal for their efforts. Team members were Robin Fellenbaum and Debra Gregory, Lititz, and Anne Spangler, Marietta.

The county's diary judging team came up with a sixth-place showing this year. Team members were Gary Akers, Quarryville, Linda Kauffman, Elizabethtown, Betty Jo Bitler, Peach Bottom, and R. Mellinger, Strasburg.

In the demonstration competitions, Donna Bare, Witmer, took a first place blue ribbon for her demonstration of hunt seat equitation. Dudley Rohrer, Manheim, took a second place award for his tractor driving demonstrations.

## Can You Lock In Profits With Futures Hedging?

Market bears believe, along with Sir Isaac Newton, that what goes up must come down. These bears, eternal pessimists, believe this maxim applies not just to apples, but to hog and steer prices, too.

Now the farmer, in many important ways, is a bull, not a bear. The farmer plants a handful of seed corn and expects to get back a bushel. He buys a single chick and expects to get hundreds of eggs. He buys a little pig and expects it to gain nearly 200 pounds before it's sold. And he does all this even though he knows the rain might not come, the army worms might get his corn, the hogs might get pneumonia or the chickens might die. He does it even though he doesn't know how much money he's going to get.

The farmer is a bull. An incurable optimist. While the farmer may complain about the weather, taxes, Washington, Harrisburg, buyers, suppliers and the way everyone ignores his plight, deep in his heart he knows that things will always work out for the best. Events of the past few months have brought spreading smiles to the faces of the farmer optimists. Never before has the farmer gotten so much for his crops and his animal products.

Many people didn't believe the markets could come so far in so short a time. Many now believe that the markets cannot go much farther and that prices will start to decline shortly. If these bears are right, the farmer who hedges his production will likely wind up

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Bill McFetridge, left, and Bob Festger, commodity brokers with Allentown's Rosenthal and Co., keep tabs on swings in

the markets by watching computerized TV set that displays up-to-the-minute quotations.

Lancaster Farming Photo