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FARM TRENDS

A summary of market
and commodity news
for the past week

by Dick Wanner

Dairymen Meet in Missouri

Clayton, Missouri, was the site this week for a public hearing to review levels of Class 1 milk prices paid to farmers in all federal milk marketing orders. Local dairy interests were represented at the meeting by Eastern and Interstate milk cooperatives.

Among the proposals submitted at the hearing were those which would:

-- Provide for increases in Class 1 order prices, which presently are below the levels of market prices prevailing in most areas of the country.

-- Establish monthly Class 1 prices based upon prices paid for manufacturing grade milk in Minnesota and Wisconsin during the immediately preceding month, rather than the second preceding month as at present.

-- Provide for a basic formula minimum, or floor, for the fall and winter months based on anticipated market price levels.

The hearing also heard evidence concerning the possible impact on market price levels of premium prices being paid above order prices, in conjunction with any amendments which might result from the hearing.

Dr. Edward E. Hand, economist for Interstate, told the hearing. "The fluid milk industry is in a crisis stage in the Northeast. Producer Class 1 and resulting blend prices are too low to cover the cost of production and the outlook is demoralizing. This situation has prevailed for about one year and corrective action must be taken by increasing and stabilizing Class 1 prices throughout this production year and through June, 1974."

Hand went on to point out that the USDA's July issue of "Agriculture Prices" contained only two items that did not increase in price. These were five h.p. gas engines and antifreeze. Compared to last year, Pennsylvania prices for dairy inputs registered awesome increases, according to Hand's figures.

For example, the October 15, 1972, price for 41 pct. cottonseed meal in the Commonwealth was \$6.40-cwt. The July 15, 1973, price was \$12.00. Other price comparisons on the

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Record Crowds, Exhibitors, Heat . . .

Ag Progress Days Is "Biggest Ever"

A crowd of some 40,000 people flocked to Hershey this week for the 1973 Pennsylvania Ag Progress Days held Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The record number of visitors viewed the record number of 120 commercial exhibitors in record-breaking temperatures that hovered around the 100-degree mark for the entire three days.

The three-day show climaxed more than a year of planning. Max Smith, Lancaster County agricultural agent and field days chairman said, "The show was the most successful outdoor agricultural event ever held in Central Pennsylvania." Smith attributed that success to a lot of hard work on the part of volunteers, and excellent facilities at the Milton Hershey School Farms.

Field equipment demonstrations were perhaps the best attended activities at the show. Also on view were a family living program, environmental improvement projects, and livestock and dairy demonstrations. A steady stream of buses shuttled visitors from the Ag Progress Days site to Founders Hall at the Milton Hershey School and to one of the school's dairy barns.

One of the most talked about features of this year's show was a methane gas generator which uses cow manure to produce fuel. It was developed by Lebanon County extension agents.

A specially-designed digester is filled with an equal mixture of

cow manure and water. An electric heating element is used to heat the water to 90 degrees. The gas produced is about 65 percent methane which can be used for heating, lighting, or fuel for farm machinery.

Although most U. S. researchers claim the economics of converting agricultural wastes into usable fuel at present is marginal, many professionals believe cheaper conversion methods can be found.

"The potential for producing methane from agricultural wastes is enormous," said Dr. Donald A. Harter, Extension resource development agent at The Pennsylvania State University.

He added that organic waste from 100,000 cattle has the potential of supplying the natural gas needs of 30,000 people. In the state, 700,000 milk cows alone produce an estimated 1.75 million

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Warren Schmuck, Peach Bottom RD2, shown here with his Brown Swiss cow which took breed champion honors at Tuesday's Southcentral District 4-H Show in Harrisburg.

4-H & FFA Dairy Shows in Harrisburg

Area farm folk were kept busy this week, especially if they tried to take in Ag Progress Days at Hershey along with the Southcentral District 4-H Dairy Show on Tuesday and the Southeastern Regional FFA District Dairy Show on Wednesday. Both dairy shows were held in the Farm Show Arena in Harrisburg.

On Tuesday, two hundred and fourteen animals were exhibited by 176 4-H club members from

seven Southcentral Pennsylvania counties including Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon and York. Included in the animals exhibited were 117 Holsteins, 14 Brown Swiss, eight Milking Shorthorns, 16 Jerseys, 21 Ayrshire and 38 Guernseys. Lebanon County had 26 4-H animals on exhibit.

Winners, by breed, were:

Brown Swiss

Junior champion, Katherine Feidt, Millersburg, Dauphin Co.; junior reserve, Paul H. Myers, III, Thomasville RD1, York Co.;

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Farm Calendar

Monday, September 3

Labor Day.

Tuesday, September 4

Lancaster County Farmers Association meeting, Farm and Home Center.

Wednesday, September 5

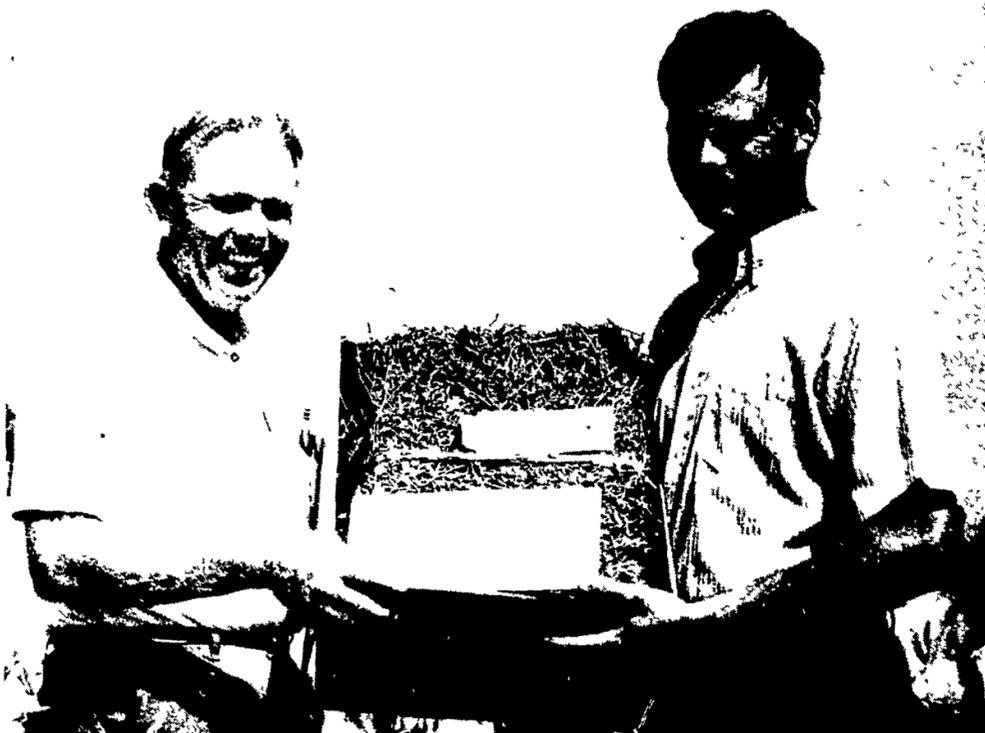
7:30 p.m. - Lancaster County Conservation District meeting, Farm and Home Center.

8 p.m. - Red Rose 4-H Beef and

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Tom Zartman, right, won top honors in the State Hay Show held Wednesday in Hershey during Ag Progress Days. He is shown

being congratulated by Penn State's Dr. John Baylor, one of nation's best-known forage experts.