

Lancaster Farming

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FARM TRENDS

A summary of market
and commodity news
for the past week

by Dick Wanner

Wither Go Beef Prices?

The freeze on beef prices ends September 12, and there was a time when prognosticators were saying live cattle prices would skyrocket when the freeze went off. The roan candle predictions have dwindled to sparkler dimensions, and some market seers are predicting very little increase from the present levels of \$50 to \$52 for choice steers. The majority opinion seems to hold that prices will go up somewhat in the next few weeks, then level off or even fall back a bit.

Hogs Take a Beating

Hog prices have taken a wild roller coaster ride in the past few weeks, way up to 61 cents, now way back to around 43 cents, and nobody seems to know why. Pork producers say the price is getting dangerously close to a break-even level, and some fear their hogs will become unprofitable if prices continue downward. A return to 30-cent hogs would certainly spell ruin for a great many farmers. Price fluctuations have been so rapid, that the "ins-and-outers" don't even have time to get in and out anymore.

People Are Eating Less Meat

The American public has definitely changed its eating habits in the past few months. Red meat consumption is expected to be down nine pounds per person for the year. Fish, chicken and cheese consumption moved up, but eggs dropped a bit.

Few Restaurants Close Because of Meat Prices

A spokesman for the Pennsylvania Restaurant Association says that he's heard of no restaurants closing solely because of meat prices. "Our members have been able to maintain their meat supplies," he said. "The big established accounts, those who pay their bills on time, have been able to get 100 percent of their meat orders. Newer accounts, and slow-paying accounts, have been running into trouble."

Restauranters are anxious to have the freeze lifted, because it's fouling up their normal profit computations. Usually, a restaurant will triple its raw food price to arrive at a menu price. For example, if the raw food price of a chicken dinner is 85 cents, the menu price would be \$2.55. Under the freeze, a 15 cent increase in the raw food price to \$1 means an increase in the menu price to \$2.70, instead of the \$3.00 it would be if restaurants were allowed to compute their profits with their usual method.

Farm Family Hosts Guest From Poland

A young agricultural scientist from Poland is spending nine months in Lancaster County, learning as much as he can about Americans and their way of life, and about agriculture in this part of the country.

Walenty Mazur, is a 23-year-old Polish chemist who came to this country as part of the Mennonite Central Committee's Exchange Visitor Program for Polish agriculturists. His nine-month stay began last March and will continue through December, when he will return to Poland. Exchange visitors can spend their entire nine months living and working with one host family. Walenty, though, is splitting his time between the Wilmer Kraybill farm near Elverson and Weaver's Greenhouse in Lancaster.

"I am glad to get to know two different aspects of your agriculture," Walenty said one recent morning in the living room of the Kraybill farmhouse. "In Poland, I work with agricultural chemicals, testing them for effectiveness. These chemicals are used both on the fields and in the greenhouses, so I am finding my stay here very interesting."

Walenty lives with his parents on a 30-acre farm in Upper Silesia, one of the most heavily industrialized regions of the world. "There is always smoke," he said, "and a haze from the foundries. But there is also a lot of farming, and much of it is highly mechanized."

An indication of the degree of mechanization can be seen in the

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Garden Spot Trio Gets FFA Awards

This was award week for three of Garden Spot High School's Grassland Chapter FFA members. It started last Friday at the Mount Joy Vo-Tech School when Ray Martin was named Lancaster County Star Farmer, and his classmate, Larry Ressler, was named Lancaster County Star Agribusinessman. Then, on Tuesday it was learned that the state proficiency award for agricultural production had gone to Robert L. Burkhart, a 1972 Garden Spot graduate.

Judges for the Star Farmer award named Ephrata's Paul Horning alternate. The judges were Robert Bucher, from Commonwealth National Bank, Robert Zook, Production Credit Association, and Dick Wanner, Lancaster Farming Newspaper.

Ray Martin - Star Farmer

Ray is deeply involved in the brand new dairy operation on his father's farm at New Holland RD1. Ray's parents are Eli and Kathryn Martin. When he graduates from high school next June, Ray plans to assume full responsibility for the dairy operation.

Actually, Ray has a large



Larry Ressler, left, and Ray Martin were named Lancaster County Star Agribusinessman and Star Farmer, respectively, last Friday in judging at the Mount Joy Vo-Tech school.

Recruiting Drive Set By DHIA

A promotion program to attract new members was approved at the latest quarterly meeting of the Red Rose DHIA board of directors. This will be the second year in a row for such a program, although this year the promotion will span a longer period of time.

During last year's promotion, 18 new herds were signed up for regular DHIA testing. The promotion is aimed at dairymen who feel they might benefit from testing, but who want to try the service before committing themselves. These farmers will have their herds tested once, free of charge, by a regular DHIA supervisor. They will get the same service from the supervisor and the same test results from Penn State that other DHIA members receive. If they like the service, they can sign up.

Costs for the promotion are being borne jointly by Penn State, which will absorb processing costs, and the local DHIA, which will pay tester fees. The program will be open from September through December.

Association president Robert Kauffman noted during the meeting that the group had been losing money for about a year, but quickly added that this was by design. "We found ourselves with \$20,000 in the bank," he told a visiting dairyman, "and we felt this was more cushion than we needed. So, the last time we

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measure of responsibility right now. His father is occupied much of the time managing a beef operation, so Ray does most of the milking, feeding, record keeping and clean up chores. He also maintains the records, does the heat detection and selects sires.

Dairying is new to the Martin farm. Beef and potatoes had been the chief sources of revenue. Beef is still the main factor, but Ray and his father turned the potato shed into a dairy barn.

The dairy operation is a 50-50 father-son partnership. The partnership presently owns 18 grade and one registered Holstein cows, 8 grade and one registered Holstein heifer, and



Bob Burkhart, winner of the State Proficiency Award awarded annually to an outstanding FFA member.

three registered Ayrshires. Ray grows hay and corn for his dairy operation, and does most of

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, September 8
10:30 a.m. - Sire Power-NEBA Open House, Tunkhannock. Pennsylvania Dutch Farm Festival, Kempton, September 8-9.
Flax Schutching Festival, Stahlstown.

Sunday, September 9
34th Annual National Plowing Contest, Don Bailey farm, Sauk Centre, Minnesota

Monday, September 10
8 p.m. - Manheim Young Farmer barn meeting, "Anhydrous", Luke Brubaker farm, Mount Joy RD1.

Fulton Grange meeting, Election of Officers, Oakryn

Tuesday, September 11
7:30 p.m. - Farm and Home (Continued On Page 40)

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