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FARM TRENDS

A summary of market and commodity news for the past week

by Dick Wanner

A record crop of feed grains highlights the crop production estimates received this week from the USDA's Crop Reporting Board. A summary of the board's estimates, as of October 1, appears below.

CORN--A record large 5,763 million-bushel crop is forecast, slightly below (5 million bushels) last month but 4 percent (210 million bushels) above last year's crop.

SORGHUM GRAIN--Prospective production is a record high 999 million bushels, up 2 percent from a month earlier and 22 percent (178) million bushels) above last year's crop. A record yield of 63.0 bushels is forecast.

FEED GRAINS--Production of corn, sorghum, oats, and barley combined is forecast at a record 211 million tons, slightly above last month's forecast and 6 percent above last year.

SOYBEANS--A record large 1,588 million-bushel crop is forecast, 1 percent (10 million bushels) below last month but 24 percent (305 million bushels) above last year's crop. A record yield of 28.3 bushels is forecast.

OILSEEDS--Production of soybeans, cottonseed, peanuts and flaxseed combined is put at a record 55.1 million tons, down slightly (0.2 million tons) from last month but 20 percent (9.2 million tons) above 1972.

ALL WHEAT--Forecast production of 1,727 million bushels is record high, up 12 percent (182 million bushels) from 1972 but down slightly (0.7 million bushels) from the September 1 forecast as other spring wheat declined slightly.

FOOD GRAINS--Output of wheat, rye, and rice collectively is expected to total 57.3 million tons, 11 percent over 1972 but slightly below the September 1 forecast with rice accounting for nearly all the decline.

ALL TOBACCO--Forecast of all tobacco, at 1,770 million pounds, is up 1 percent from 1972. Flue-cured, at 1,128 million pounds, is up 11 percent, burley production, at 500 million pounds, is down 17 percent.

FALL POTATOES--Production is forecast at 252.7 million cwt, up 2 percent from the 248.8 million cwt. harvested in 1972.

Senate Ag Comm. Studying Milk Bill

The Pennsylvania Senate Committee on Agriculture held a hearing Wednesday to discuss the merits of Senate Bill 130. The bill was drafted and introduced by the Shapp administration, and it would replace the present milk marketing law.

Many of the provisions of the old law remain in SB 130. The key feature which would not be included in the new law would be the Milk Marketing Board's power to regulate retail milk prices. The administration reasons that controls have kept Pennsylvania milk prices higher than retail prices in surrounding states.

The milk industry, particularly dealers, contend that lifting price controls will result in marketing

chaos, the bankruptcy of a great many independent milk dealers and, eventually, higher retail prices.

One of the state's leading advocates for dropping price controls in Peter H. Sandfort, president of Loudon Hill Farms. Sandfort's firm operates six farms and 35 dairy stores in the Scranton and Wilkes-Barre area. Sandfort also told the committee

that he buys milk from some 350 dairy farmers.

(Continued on Page 44)

Grange Meet

The Pennsylvania Grange held their annual convention this week in Reading. A full report will appear in next week's LANCASTER FARMING.

FFA's Return Bearing Honors

Local FFA members attending the national FFA convention in Kansas City, Mo., last week brought home with them an impressive number of awards. American Farmer degrees, the highest achievement for any FFA member, were presented to two Lancaster County youths, both Solanco graduates.

Thomas W. Aaron, Drumore and Dale Bollinger, Quarryville, received their American Farmer degrees in ceremonies on Thursday of convention week.

The American Farmer Degree is presented only by the National Organization of the Future Farmers of America to members who have demonstrated exceptional agricultural and leadership ability. State FFA Associations are permitted to submit candidates for the American Farmer Degree based on total FFA membership in the state. The 564 members awarded the American Farmer Degree represent the highest

achievement of more than 448,000 FFA members now enrolled in the nation's 7,798 high school vocational agriculture departments.

FFA members begin as "Greenhands" and after one year of membership may be advanced by the local chapter to the degree of "Chapter Farmer". The third

(Continued On Page 24)

In This Issue

Markets	2-4
Sale Register	41
Farmers Almanac	6
Classified Ads	45
Editorials	10
Homestead Notes	26
Home on the Range	30
Thoughts in Passing	22
No-Till Considerations	35
Holstein Banquet	37
Lebanon Co DHIA	16
Agway Annual Meet	7

Lebanon DHIA

Lebanon County Dairy Herd Improvement Association members will find a DHIA report for September on page 16 of this issue of LANCASTER FARMING. We hope to be able to include this feature every month.

Farm Calendar

Monday, October 29

9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. - Shaver Poultry Seminar, Ramada Inn, Lancaster.

1 p.m. - York Area Farm-City tour of Lancaster County

Tuesday, October 30

9:30 a.m. - Chester County Extension Workshop, Men's Knit Jacket, Malvern.

7:30 p.m. - PA Organic Farmer-Consumer Organization meeting, Farm and Home Center.

NEPPCO Convention and Ex-

(Continued On Page 36)



Don Robinson, left, and Clyde Martin take a look at the camera end of a closed circuit TV system which was installed last

Tuesday in Martin's dairy barn. The system is being studied for its value as a means of watching problem animals.

TV in the Barn - A New Farm Tool

Lancaster County's newest TV star is a 13-year-old Holstein with a bad case of milk fever. Actually, the cow isn't looking for any acting awards, but she was sick for a few days, and her owner, Clyde Martin, East Earl RD1, wanted to keep an eye on her.

Martin is the first local participant in a study organized by Donald Robinson, a vo-ag teacher at Garden Spot High School. The study is aimed at finding out how useful closed-circuit TV systems might be in dairy and other livestock operations. Closed circuit TV has been put to use by a number of livestock farmers across the country, and Robinson felt it was time for a Lancaster County test.

Tuesday afternoon, a small TV camera was attached to a bracket on the ceiling near Martin's calving stall, where the

sick cow was confined. A coaxial cable was run from the camera to a TV monitor in the living room, where all of the Martin family can keep an eye on the cow without going to the barn.

If Martin decides to install the system permanently, it will cost him about \$600 for the camera, cable, brackets, lens and possibly some lighting fixtures in the barn and feed bunks. "All I have to do is save three calves or one cow, and I'd have the system paid for," Martin says.

What at first seems like an exercise in laziness or a needless extravagance, becomes, after some thought, an eminently practical idea, according to Robinson. Besides watching sick cows, Martin could use the system to aid in heat detection, to keep an eye on new born calves and to spot calving difficulties.

(Continued On Page 15)