

Buyers

(Continued From Page 1)

annually ten years ago to just 18 million pounds last year.

The future of the crop here depends upon how tobacco is merchandised, Hess feels. "More and more foreign tobacco is coming into the U.S.," he said, "and a lot of it is going into cigars. Today, foreign tobacco accounts for about two-thirds of the cigar filler market, while the U. S. supplies only a third. Not too many years ago, those figures were exactly reversed. Wage rates in other countries are a lot lower than they are here, and places like Mexico and South America can grow tobacco cheaper than we can here. When our prices get too high, the cigar makers get their supplies from foreign growers."

Last year's average selling price for Lancaster County tobacco was 46 cents a pound. The year before it was 34 cents. Could it go to 60 cents this year or even, as many hope, 75 cents? "It seems unlikely that we'll have 10 cent price jumps two years in a row," Hess said. "And as prices move up, we'll be threatened more and more by imported tobacco. We've got to start thinking about growing for the higher priced southern market if we're going to maintain tobacco as an important cash crop in Lancaster County."

There is no crop on the horizon that will match the value of tobacco as a cash crop, Hess feels. "Our weather pattern is the best and most consistent anywhere. Over a period of time, if we work together, and reach out for new markets, we'll be able to get higher prices for our crops."

One listener in the audience challenged Hess's assertion that

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Farm Calendar

Monday, December 10
Fulton Grange meeting, Oakryn.

Tuesday, December 11
7:30 p.m. - Meeting, Board of Directors of the Farm and Home Foundation at the Farm and Home Center, Conference Room.
7:30 p.m. - Ephrata Adult Farmers meeting, Swine Management, Ephrata Vo-Ag Department.
7:45 p.m. - Dairy Meeting, Management of the Dairy Calf, Garden Spot High School
Lancaster County 4-H Beef Show and Sale, Lancaster Stock Yards, Inc., December 11-12.

Wednesday, December 12
7:30 p.m. - Eastern Lancaster County Adult Farmer Beef Cattle meeting, Hinkletown Elementary School.
7:30 p.m. - Ephrata Young

Farmers Officers' meeting, Ephrata Junior High School.

Southeast District 4-H Beef Show and Sale, Lancaster Stock Yards; Show at 9 a.m.; Sale at 1 p.m.

National Farmers Organization (NFO) National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, December 12, 13, 14.

Friday, December 14
7:00 p.m. - Manheim Young Farmers and wives Christmas dinner night, Heritage Room, Evan's Restaurant, Manheim.

7:00 p.m. - Pennsylvania Egg Marketing Association meeting, World Food Situation, Colonial Motor Lodge, Arrow Room.



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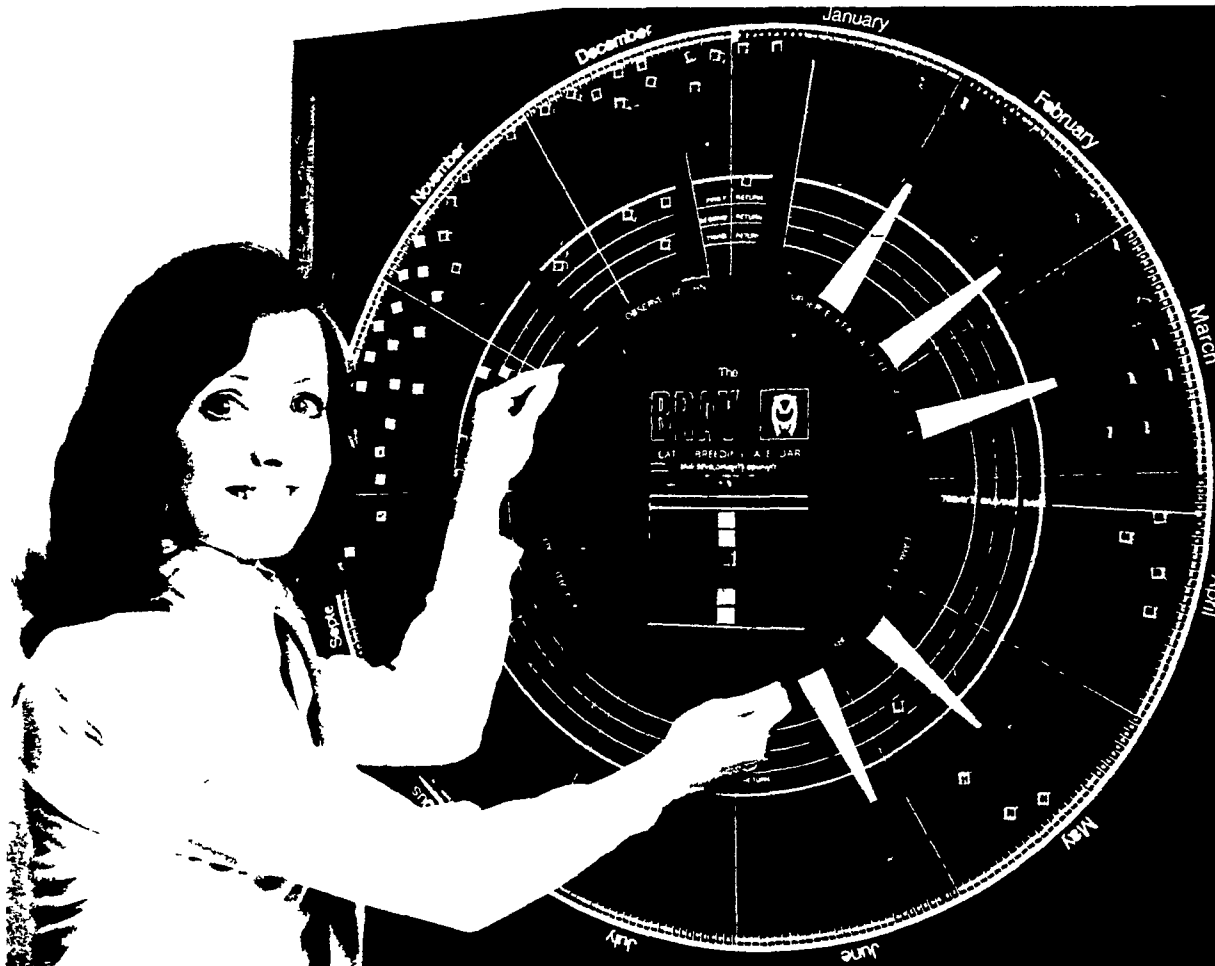
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