

# Agriculture's 'New Image' Increases Vo-Ag Interest

Vocational agriculture is undergoing an upsurge of new interest among high school students across the nation, according to Dr. David R. McClay, head of the Department of Agricultural Education at The Pennsylvania State University. He says a new image of agriculture is developing as young people see agriculture as

many fields of work in addition to farming.

As vocational programs expand to meet the demands for agricultural training, more teachers are needed, Dr. McClay points out. The situation in Pennsylvania is typical. With opportunities expanding, this year's class of agricultural education candidates includes

both men and women.

The job picture looks excellent for these teacher candidates, he reports. While their peers in other subject areas look forward to stiff competition for a handful of teaching openings, agricultural teachers are in prime demand. Other states are writing McClay for news of available agricultural teachers. But it looks like Pennsylvania will have none to spare in the foreseeable future.

There are now 327 Agricultural teachers in 212 Pennsylvania high schools and area vocational-technical schools, according to

Dr. McClay. What's more, a number of schools plan to expand or add new programs next year.

What's the reason for this sudden boom in agricultural education? High school vocational agriculture programs used to come under the old Smith-Hughes Act. By definition they were pretty limited in curriculum. In fact, they excluded non-farm agriculture.

This restricted view tended to be shared by vocational counselors, educators and the public in general. As a result, the entire area of agricultural education was in danger of being phased out

of the public schools for lack of interest.

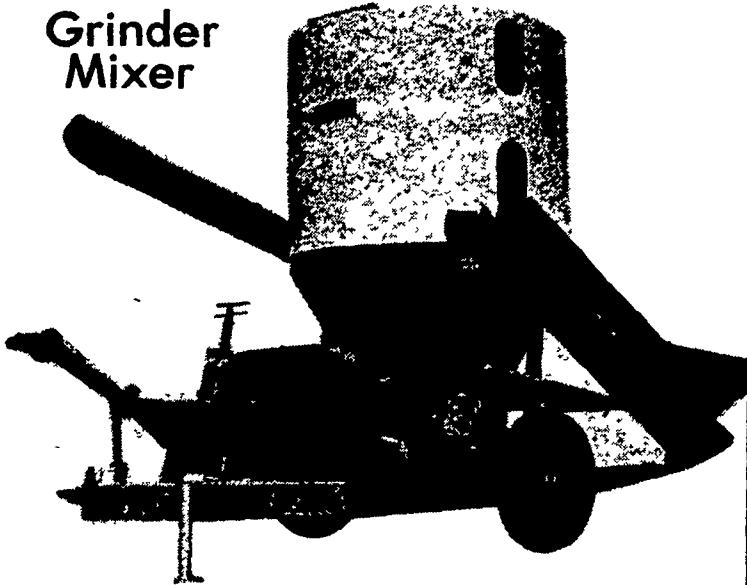
Then in 1963 Congress passed a new vocational education act which changed all this — making it possible for students at the high school level to enroll in any field, knowledge or skill that was useful to agriculture. This meant greater flexibility in curriculum and opened the field to many students who otherwise would have overlooked a career in agriculture.

At about the same time, vocational agricultural programs in the high schools got a shot in the arm from what McClay calls "the new image of agriculture." "Agriculture is not just farming anymore in the eye of the public," he explains.

Instead, there's a growing recognition that the field includes not only farming but the whole range of agribusiness — the processing and marketing of food and of agricultural products, a growing industry in ornamental horticulture, forestry, agricultural mechanics, the handling of laboratory animals for all kinds of research, and a multitude of other job areas that call for the special knowledge and skills that can be acquired through the study of agriculture.

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## Meat Import Quota Suspension Continued

Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz announced recently that meat import quotas, which the President suspended during the last half of 1972 and for all of 1973, will continue to be suspended for 1974. This applies to fresh, frozen and chilled beef, veal, mutton and goat meat subject to the 1964 Meat Import Law.

These meats will be able to move freely into the United States without restrictions except for meeting the usual inspection and health standards and tariff regulations.

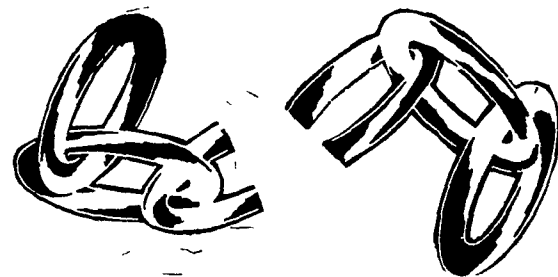
Butz stated that this suspension of quotas is expected to continue through 1974. However, as required by law, the Secretary will review the situation every three months. Should marketing conditions change substantially, the suspension of quotas will be reconsidered.

The Secretary said that red meat production in the U. S. declined in 1972 and 1973 at a time of vigorous growth in employment and income. This led to higher consumer meat prices. The President suspended meat quotas in June 1972 to moderate inflationary pressures.

Cattlemen have responded to the higher price levels of the last two years by increasing their breeding herds. Thus, there are

more cattle to come to market in the months and years ahead. Consumer beef prices have stabilized since the end of summer, and farm beef prices have dropped sharply from summer levels. However, supplies of beef are expected to be tight through the winter, with larger supplies expected later in 1974.

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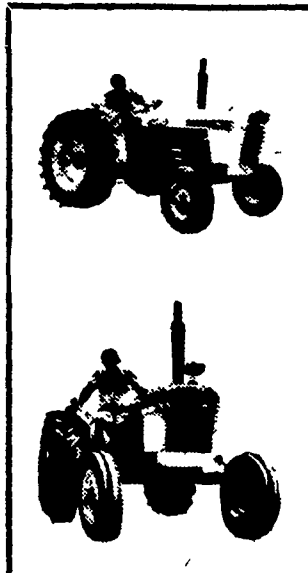
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