

# Lancaster Farming

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Lancaster Countians were well-represented at Thursday's Pennfield Dairy Awards Banquet in York County. Seated, left to right, are Joel Habegger, Pennfield's feed marketing

manager, J. Harold Musser and Jesse Balmer. Standing are James Musser, Earl Stauffer, Clarence Stauffer, Ray Young, G. Hershey Hostetter and Ed Snavely.

## Pennfield Awards to High Milk Producers

Avalong Dairy Restaurant, York County, was the site for the Third Annual Pennfield Dairy Awards Banquet held Thursday. The feed firm awards prizes to those of its customers who own or manage herds with outstanding records.

Joel C. Habegger, Pennfield Feed marketing division manager, served as master of ceremonies and introduced special guests. Featured speaker of the day was Dr. Richard Peacock.

Peacock, director of technical services for Pennfield, discussed the company's computerized total rations program. He pointed out how it has benefited dairy farmers in the past year and projected future plans for CTR.

Robert E. Gregory, dairy and livestock marketing manager, introduced this year's winners and awarded each with an engraved trophy, plaque or silver plate. The 1973 categories

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Raymond Long feeds about 5000 head of steers every year on his Berks County cattle farm. He sold a successful trucking business in 1969 to buy the farm.

## Conservation Law Meeting Announced For Ephrata

Farmers in the northeastern portion of Lancaster County will have an opportunity to learn more about Pennsylvania's Clean Streams Law and its effect on agriculture at an evening meeting set for Monday, April 1.

The meeting is being sponsored jointly by the Cocalico Watershed Association and the Lancaster County Conservation District. It will be held at Ephrata High School and will start at 7:30 p.m.

## Feedmen Look At Fuel and Finance

"The government has turned minor scarcities into major shortages," H. Lou Moore told a Pennsylvania feed industries conference in Harrisburg on Wednesday. The conference was a cooperative effort by PennAg Industries Association and Penn State. Moore is a professor of agricultural economics at Penn State and a vocal critic of government price controls. "Washington started price controls because of pressure from consumers, but that hasn't helped our inflation problem one bit."

"They've also increased social security payments, minimum wages and social welfare programs. Last year they spent \$3 billion on the food stamp program. That had more of an effect on inflation than the Russian wheat deal that got so much publicity. I think the government has given up on the inflation fight. Everybody talks about inflation but nobody wants to do anything about it."

Moore said 1973 was a good year for farmers, with net incomes up some 32 percent, but he doesn't expect 1974 to be as good. Moore feels agriculture will solve its fuel and fertilizer problems this year and predicts an even bigger export market this year for American crops.

"We grow 43 percent of the world's corn and 74 percent of the world's soybeans on 12 percent of the world's land," Moore said. "We have the climate and the soil to continue to be the world's largest exporter of agricultural products."

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## FARM TRENDS by Dick Wanner

Farm Financial Outlook For 1974 Is Good

Most farm operators are expected to close out 1974 in very favorable financial condition as a result of continued high net farm incomes and relative ease in obtaining loan funds to finance capital purchases and production expenditures, according to the USDA Outlook and Situation Board.

As of January 1, 1974, total farm sector assets were valued at \$459.8 billion, total debts at \$81.7 billion, and farmers' and landlords' equities at \$378.1 billion. The debt-to-asset ratio on January 1, 1974, was 17.8 percent -- down from 19.6 percent on January 1, 1973.

Annual capital formation for the sector in 1974 is forecast at \$12.3 billion, and uses of funds to purchase real estate from owners leaving the sector are estimated at \$12.7 billion. These two uses of funds are expected to be financed by using \$13.2 billion of current income from farm and nonfarm sources and by increasing total debts by \$11.8 billion.

The balance sheet forecast for January 1, 1975, shows total assets reaching \$521 billion, up 13 percent. Total debts are forecast at \$94 billion, up 14 percent. The ratio of debt to assets will therefore rise modestly from 17.8 percent to 18.0 percent.

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## Ray Long's Glad He Switched . . .

# From Trucks to Cattle

In 1969, Ray Long sold a thriving trucking business for enough money to do nothing for the rest of his life. Long isn't a man who can do nothing, though, so he bought a beef farm in Berks County. "I was glad I did, too, until last September," the cattleman told Lancaster Farming this week in the kitchen of his Bechtelsville RD1 farmhouse. "This business was good to me up until the market went bad. I don't see it getting any better for another six months."

"The people who stick it out, though, will be okay in the long run," Long said. He has a big investment in the cattle business and he does plan to stick it out. Besides his 300 acres in Bechtelsville, Long has another farm in the Hamburg area and a 750-acre spread in southcentral Virginia with a cow-calf operation.

Last year the former trucker ran some 5000 steers through his feedlots. "I like to feed heavy steers. I buy them when they're at 900 to 1000 pounds and finish them to a choice 1200 to 1250 pounds. Some, like the angus, go out a little lighter, but I usually get more for those anyway."

"It costs me about 50-cents for every pound those animals gain. I sold a load yesterday for 43.5-cents a pound. Nobody can keep on doing that for too long."

Long feels that the cattle market would be a lot better off

today if the government hadn't slapped price controls on beef last summer. "A lot of feeders held their cattle off the market, back then, waiting for higher prices. Some of them are still waiting. I heard about a feeder in the Midwest a few days ago who took a load of 1600-pound steers to the auction and sold them for 31-cents a pound. There are still a lot of heavy steers out there and the market's going to be rough until they're all sold."

Cattle are sold from the Long herd almost every business day. He sends many of his animals to a local butcher, and what the butcher doesn't buy go to local auctions. "I've always got cattle ready to sell. That way I can take advantage of temporary swings in the market. During the truck strike, we moved 12 loads of steers out."

\*One man works almost full-time in trucking Long's cattle to market. He uses three big tractor-trailers for the work. Another full-time man helps with trucking, feeding and other chores, and a part-timer works evenings. Long's wife, Mary, helps out whenever she's needed.

Labor is kept to a minimum by the no-roughage feeding program. "I buy corn from farmers wherever I can get it," Long said, "and I mix it with supplement and feed it. The

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