

Kuhfuss Scores Farm, Retail Meat Price Gap

Despite a drop in the retail price of meats in recent weeks, there still is an abnormal spread between retail and farm prices, William J. Kuhfuss, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, said last week before a youth

leadership conference in Oakbrook, Illinois. With hogs selling the previous week at \$30 to \$32 per hundredweight and choice slaughter steers at \$39 to \$42 per hundredweight, farmers are losing from \$6 to \$8 per head on hogs and up to

\$100 per head on cattle, the national farm leader said.

While retail meat prices dropped some, Kuhfuss said, they do not reflect the drop from the February high of \$48 for steers and \$42.30 for hogs to the present levels.

Such losses are causing farmers to take a careful look at increasing hog production and in buying replacement cattle for their feedlots, he said, and this

could mean higher consumer prices resulting from shorter supplies in the future.

The Federation president said that farmers must have either higher market prices for cattle or hogs or a reevaluation of the other costs that must be paid for by the consumer so an adequate return can encourage an increase in production at a level to compensate the farmer and

rancher for his risk capital and labor.

"Grain farmers are also faced with an increase of some 100 percent for fuel and from 200 to 300 percent increase in fertilizer costs.

"Like everyone else, farmers have been hit by increasing inflation which the government reports ran at an annual rate of 10.8 percent for the first three months of 1974, with indications for further increases in the second quarter.

"There can be little doubt that government-fed inflation is one of the major causes of high food prices for everything, including food.

"Government price controls created chaos in the livestock industry and led to the wild price gyrations that hurt farmers as well as consumers," Kuhfuss said.

"With the removal of price controls April 30, there is some hope that the livestock industry can return to more normal operations with supply and demand performing their normal

market functions. However, until Congress and the Administration takes steps to cool inflation, consumers should not be surprised by higher food prices in the last half of 1974," Kuhfuss said.

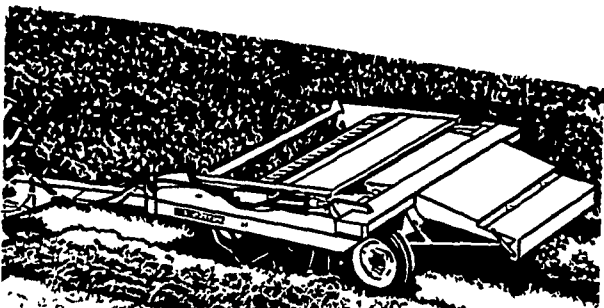
Horst Attends Seminar

Marvin J. Horst of Marvin J. Horst, Lebanon, Pennsylvania, recently took part in a merchandising seminar conducted by Amana Refrigeration, Inc. at the firm's Iowa headquarters.

He joined a select national group of retailers and retail salesmen as a guest of Amana for sales and marketing training on the complete line of Amana refrigerator-freezers, freezers, Radarange(R) microwave ovens, room air conditioners, compactors and dehumidifiers.

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Poor Weather Delays Soviet Crop Planting

The Soviet government announced Wednesday that bad weather has seriously retarded the sowing of spring crops. The phrasing and statistics in the report indicated the nation may face another agriculture crisis this year.

The front-page report in the central government newspaper Izvestia revealed that only 70.9 million acres of spring crops — including grains, sugar, cotton, sunflowers and vegetables — had been sown by April 22.

This compared with 107.2 million acres by the same time last year, when the country's farmers produced a record grain crop of 222.5 million tons.

In 1972, bad weather and mismanagement on the farms resulted in major grain shortfalls and forced the Kremlin to spend some \$2 billion of its precious hard

currency to import Western grain.

The spring wheat crop accounts for 60 to 70 per cent of annual grain production.

Izvestia said the poor weather had affected all major agricultural regions of the nation, from eastern Siberia to the European part.

In the critical regions of the Russian Federation, it said, only 21.7 million acres of spring crops were sown compared with more than 54.3 million acres last year. Less than half the spring crops were sown in the northern Caucasus zones and only a quarter of those in the rich black soil regions, the heart of the nation's grain-producing.

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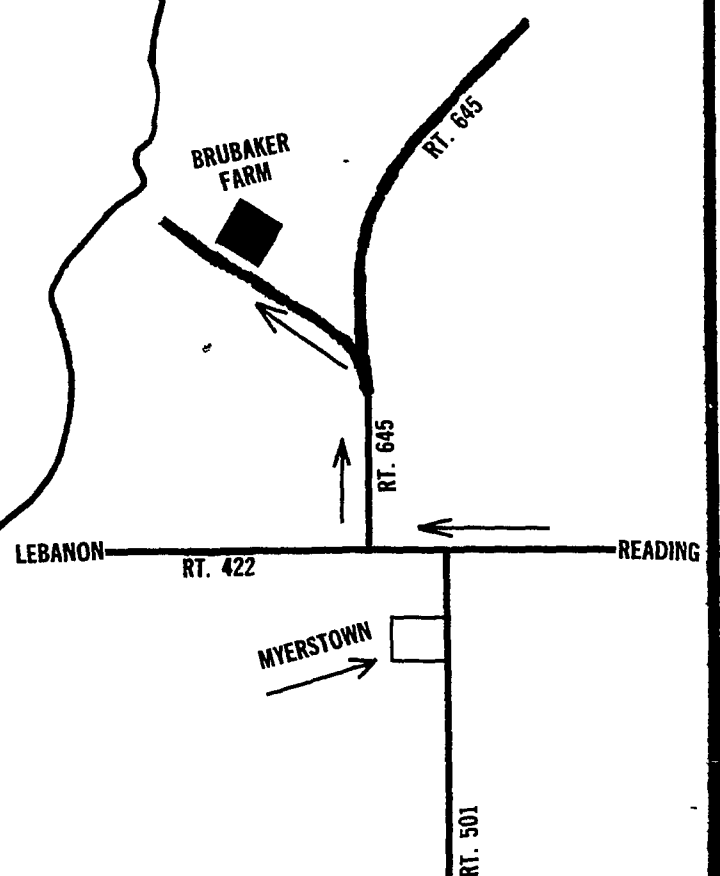
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