

Meet the Man Who

[Continued from Page 1]

Harrisburg, and when the council was formed, he was offered the chair.

The referendum defeat was a disappointment to Kooker. "If we don't promote milk to consumers," Kooker said, "we'll never convince them that they've got to pay a good price for a quality product."

Kooker is an independent, selling his milk in the

Reading area. Along with some 125 other Reading area independents, Kooker belongs to the Berks County Dairy Farmers Association. Kooker is president of that group, as well as a board member of the American Dairy Association, and a director of the Berks County Farmers Association.

Unlike most dairy farmers, Kooker wasn't reared on a farm but in a small town. His interest in agriculture began when he was a 16-year-old eagle scout. That year, just after World War II, he was selected to accompany a group of other eagle scouts on a mission of agricultural aid to war-torn Poland. Kooker was assigned as a crew member on a cattle boat bound for Danzig, laden with draft horses. "I went along to take one of the horses to an older farmer and his wife. The Germans or the Russians - I forget which - had cut the legs off

the wife, but she was gracious and cheerful. They were both wonderful people, and after they'd lost everything in the war. Yet they wanted to go back to farming. It made me realize how important farming is to people and the world."

After he graduated from high school, and while he was in college, Kooker picked up practical experience working on a Wisconsin dairy farm. He graduated from Penn State in 1951 with a degree in animal husbandry. As an ROTC graduate, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Force and served four years of active duty during the Korean war.

In 1955, he moved his family to the farm which is their present home. Presently, Kooker is milking 100 head of Registered Holsteins. He maintains his herd average of 14,500 pounds of milk and 3.9 percent butterfat with a feeding program that's heavy in haylage and corn silage. Production is up from about two years ago, Kooker said, when he changed from tie stalls and milkers with dump stations to his present free stall and milk parlor setup. "The changeover is always a problem," Kooker



Jack Kooker ponders the quality of the ration in the feed trough of his free stall dairy barn. In the near

future, he'd like to be pondering the problems involved in running the state's department of agriculture.

said, "but I think we've got things pretty well in shape now. One of the big reasons I made the change was so that I could have more to get involved in farm activities. I wanted more free time, too. I get every other Sunday off now, something I didn't have before."

Along with the change, Kooker expanded the herd from 60 to 100 cows. There are two grown Kooker sons, but neither is interested in dairying as a career. Jim Paine, the full-time hired man, lives in a mobile home in back of Kooker's house. "He didn't grow up on a farm, either," Kooker said, "and it's really working out well. He didn't come here with any bad habits to unlearn."

Jack Kooker, the dairyman, has had a profitable career as a milk

producer. Whether or not he can enjoy a similar success as politician and agriculture secretary, remains to be

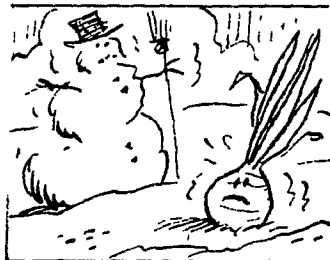
seen. There can be no doubting, though, the seriousness of his quest for Jim McHale's job.

Thought For Food



Chicken Trinidad

Brown one 2-pound quartered fryer in 1/2 cup Spanish olive oil, brown 2 cups rice, 1/4 cup minced onion, and 1/4 cup minced green pepper. Transfer to iron kettle or Dutch oven, with rice mixture on bottom layer. Add one 4-oz can mushrooms and broth. Dissolve 1/2 teaspoon saffron in 1 cup chicken bouillon, add 1 teaspoon aromatic bitters, and pour in kettle. Cook over low heat, covered, without stirring. After ten minutes, add a second cup of chicken bouillon. Cook an additional ten minutes until rice is dry and fluffy. Serves 4.



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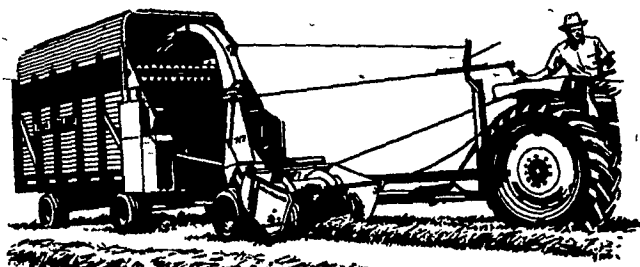
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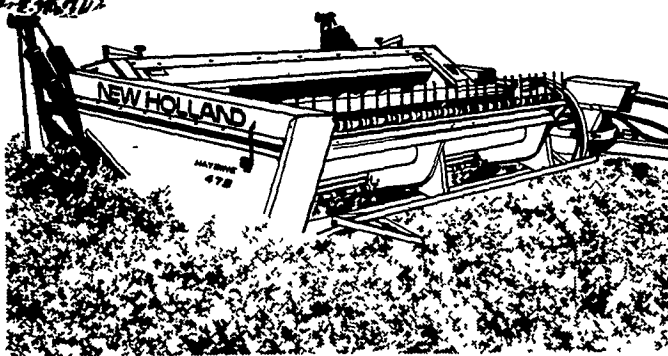


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