

Pa's Biggest Feedlot

[Continued from Page 16]

they come in.

Although the equipment represents a significant chunk of capital, its availability means that Jerry Hatcher can say, "We never have to buy feed. Never."

"We have the equipment we need to process these byproducts, and we have the people who know how to run it. It's what gives us an edge in the cattle business, and we think any feeder in Pennsylvania, or anywhere else in the Northeast, needs an edge if he's going to compete with the Midwestern feedlots."

"Land and labor costs are higher here than in the Midwest," Hatcher continued, "and the weather can kill your business. In the winter, you have to feed cattle an enormous number of calories just so they can maintain their body temperatures. And if an Eastern feeder has to buy feedgrains trucked in from the Midwest, he can be in a lot of trouble."

Hatcher himself has only been living here for the past

two years. He's had a lot of experience with feedlots west of the Mississippi, and is still associated with a group that's feeding 85,000 head on the West Coast. A 3000 head feedlot is smaller than he's used to, but Hatcher says Lebanon Valley has plans for expanding soon to 5000 head and doesn't see anything to hold them back from getting even bigger.

Presently, the company has an assured supply of enough byproducts to feed 5000 head.

Many of the feeders Hatcher buys come from Virginia. Virtually all breeds have passed through the Lebanon Valley Feedlot, but Hatcher says their best performers have been Charolais, Holsteins and Santa-Geztrudis. "We'd like to buy more feeders locally - especially Holstein bulls - if we can find the right quality at the right price," Hatcher said.

Finished animals are sold directly to packing houses locally and in Philadelphia, Hatcher said. Very few go



John Graham, a transplanted Iowa native, is operations manager for the Lebanon Valley Cattle Company. He's shown here as he helped this week to herd cattle through a loading chute onto a truck. Every animal that went onto the truck was sold at a \$150 loss. They were feeders that had been purchased at 60-cents a pound.

through the auctions.

Asked for his opinion of the future of the beef business, especially in the Northeast, Hatcher spoke enthusiastically, saying, "I feel more bullish about the beef business today than I've felt in the past four years. We have the feeders here, we have the packing houses that are willing to buy the finished cattle, and we have more consumers here than in any other part of the country. People may have slacked off on eating beef in the past year, but they'll come back. This is a beef-eating country, and that's not going to change overnight."

Hatcher said he expects retail prices to come down in the months ahead, he thinks consumption will go up, and feels liveweight prices will hover in the mid-40-cents to 50-cents per pound for the foreseeable future. "It costs other feeders maybe 40 cents to put a pound of gain on a steer. Our cost is somewhere in the mid-30's. You can see why I'm bullish."

(Editor's Note: Elsewhere in this issue of Lancaster Farming is a story about some recent Penn State work with horticultural byproducts for cattle feed. Its title is "Plant, Animal Wastes "Recycled" for Feed".)

Lititz Manheim 4-H Club

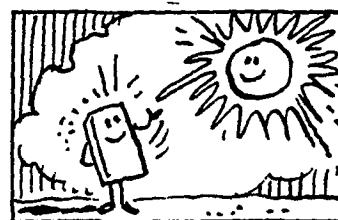
The Lititz and Manheim 4-H Club meeting and doggie roast was held at Doris and Linda Hershey's home, July 11th.

4-H queens were chosen to represent the club. Sr. Queen Doris Hershey and Jr. Queen Beverly Buckwalter.

The next meeting will be

held at the Brethren Church in Lititz at 6:30 p.m. August 8, it will be a covered dish supper.

News Reporter Beverly Buckwalter



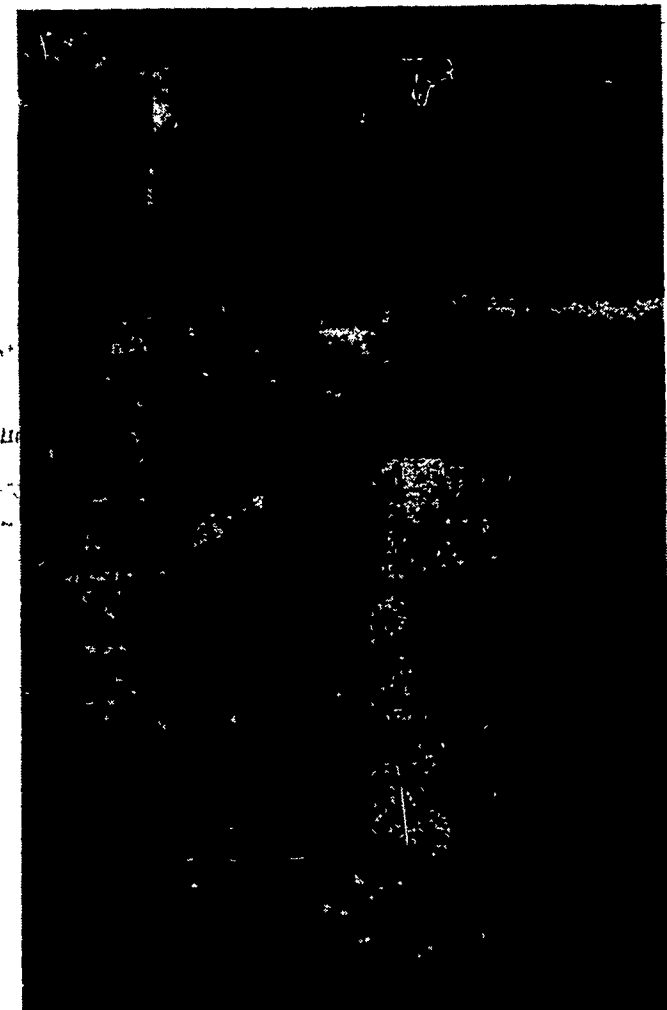
Some people believed that gold was begotten by the sun and that the heat of underground veins wholly burned everything they came into contact with, turning those substances into gold.

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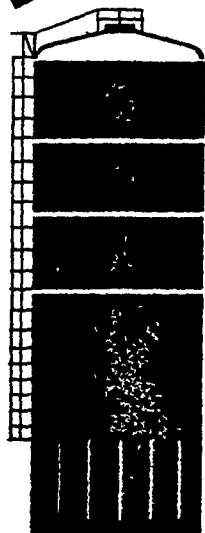
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This separator is one of the pieces of equipment used to process horticultural byproducts for use as cattle feed. Things like apple pomace and cannery wastes are run through this clean line separator to remove cans, paper and other trash.

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