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Barnes Speaks On Forage Use

Some 20 million acres of land in the Northeastern states could be used for producing more protein in the form of livestock, declared Dr. Robert F. Barnes of the U S Department of Agriculture and The Pennsylvania State University during a regional meeting of the American Society of Agronomy held recently in Durham, N.H. The 20 million acres include croplands of various quality, abandoned lands, and forests.

Dr. Barnes claimed land for forages and grasses is "the greatest renewable resource available in the Northeast." He indicated about 62 percent of the land in the northeast is unsuited for cultivated crops. With renovation and proper management, much of this land can produce forages and grasses for livestock.

He said that more than two-thirds of the dietary protein in the U. S. is derived from meat, fish, poultry, and dairy products. Total meat consumption per person in the U. S. increased from 146 pounds in 1952 to 189 pounds in 1972. Plant sources of protein, on the other hand, have decreased by about half since 1910 for products such as flour and cereals. The latter two now provide less than 20 percent of the dietary source of protein in the U. S.

Dr. Barnes gave one of two key lectures dealing with trends in Northeastern agriculture. He serves as adjunct professor of agronomy at Penn State and directs the programs of the Regional Pasture Research Laboratory of the Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, at University Park.

Although Northeastern farmers have the advantage of being close to the consumer, the area produces only 1.5 percent of the nation's beef cows and 3 percent of the sheep. The current energy crisis, he thought, could force meat producers and processors to move closer than normal to the consumer.

But closeness to market has its disadvantages. Expansion of farm operations in rural-urban areas is often hampered by increased taxes, exploitation of arable cropland for urban use, scarcity of labor, and the problems of waste disposal and the increasing potential for pollution of air, water, and land. Pollution regulations are resulting in smaller feedlots for cattle than previously to decrease waste disposal and air pollution.

Dairy farming, meanwhile, is well developed in the 12 states. About 20 percent of the fluid milk in the nation comes from Northeastern herds. Average production per cow has increased while total milk production has decreased only slightly. Dr. Barnes indicated that successful dairy farming will continue to be tied into forage production programs. Numbers of dairy cows

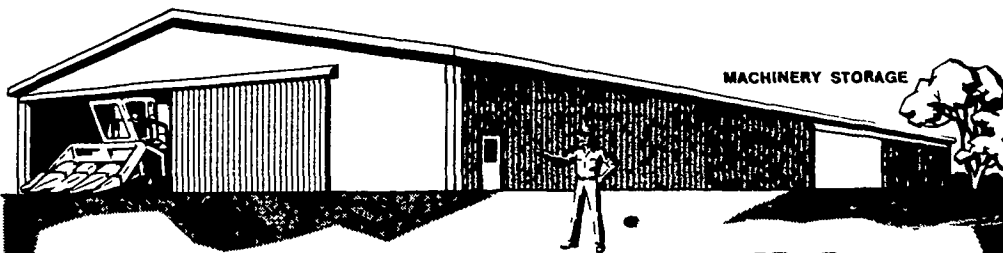
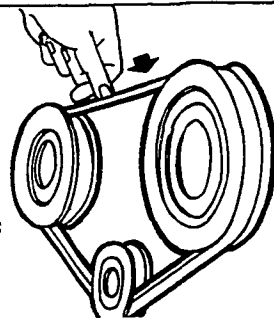
and dairy farms will probably continue downward in the Northeast, due largely to retirement of one-man dairy operations, Dr. Barnes observed. Land is being released continually from dairying. In New York alone, it is projected that 750,000 acres of additional land will be released by 1985. Only Pennsylvania, he said, has greater cattle numbers in 1974—both beef and dairy—than the average number from 1943 to 1952.

Some economists predict that consumption of red meat will increase by 2 pounds for each person yearly through 1985, he said. If this occurs, the United States will need an estimated 9.6 million more beef cows and about 50 million acres of new forage land. Furthermore, a 10 percent increase in U. S. population by 1985 will require 4 to 5 million more cows for a total of about 15 million additional animals. The total number of cattle in the U. S. in 1973, both beef and dairy breeds, was about 122 million head.

The beef cattle industry depends particularly on forages, he pointed out, since beef cows obtain over 95 percent of their nutrients from forages. And he added that beef cow numbers are determined by the amount and quality of forage available, as well as the cost of producing a calf. Thus, one of the strongest factors in determining beef prices is the number of animals available for slaughter at a given time.

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CHECK THE TENSION OF THE FAN BELT BY PUSHING IT DOWN, MIDWAY BETWEEN THE PULLEYS, WITH YOUR THUMB. THE FAN BELT SHOULD FLEX ENOUGH TO DEPRESS ABOUT HALF AN INCH. IF IT STRETCHES BEYOND THAT, IT NEEDS TO BE TIGHTENED OR REPLACED.



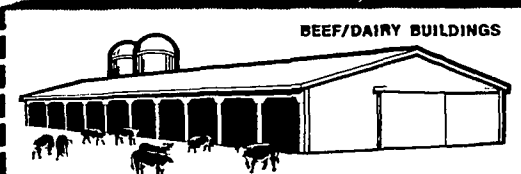
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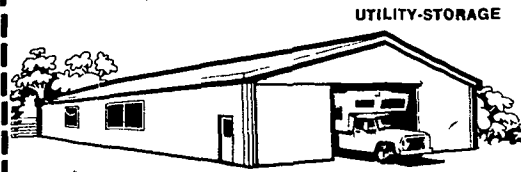
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