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Against the backdrop of a steeply rising hill on their Pequea RD1 farm, Chris Hess Sr., right, discusses farm operations with two of his sons, Chris,

Jr., center, and Raymond. Chris Sr. and his six sons farm 500 acres, 300 of which have been planted to no-till corn since 1969.

No-Till Corn Favored By Pequea Partnership

More and more area farmers are investigating the pros and cons of no-till corn planting. And every year, more of them seem to be adopting the practice. As old planters and plows wear out, the practice could become even more prevalent, especially as the state's 1977 deadline for

farm conservation planning draws nearer.

By July 1, 1977, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources has decreed that all Commonwealth farms must be operating under some kind of plan to control the movement of water-borne soil into streams. Farmers

equipped with no-till planters may have an easier time of meeting DER's requirements than farmers planting corn with conventional tillage equipment. No-till planters deposit seed

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Jane McSparran

FFA Sweetheart and Teen Leader

Jane McSparran, RD2, Peach Bottom, received a special honor this week when she was selected as the Chapter Sweetheart of the Solanco FFA Club.

The Chapter Sweetheart is selected annually by members of the FFA and must submit a picture and short biography of themselves before entering the contest.

When asked what her duties as the Sweetheart would be, Jane explained the appointment.

"The Sweetheart is mostly involved in public relations work that the FFA is involved with."

"We attend their meetings and any special functions that the FFA Chapter is involved in," she explained.

Although Jane is not a member of FFA she has worked in the field of agriculture for many years as she is a member of the Lancaster Guernsey Club, the Solanco Community Club and also the 4-H County Council.

Dairy projects have been the highlight of Jane's 4-H work as she has shown her dairy animal at the Solanco Fair, the Chester Fair and also at the 4-H shows.

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Dairy Farmers Plan March on Washington

Local dairymen are expected to converge by the hundreds on the U.S. Department of Agriculture building in Washington on Tuesday. They'll be there to protest a USDA denial of a request for milk price boosts in all 61 federal milk marketing areas across the country.

Dairy farmers are upset because the federal order price they get for milk right now just barely covers their costs of production. Figures from the Pennsylvania Farmers Association show an average blend price in the Philadelphia milkshed of around \$8.70 cwt. Average production costs for a hundred pounds of milk are \$8.56, according to Richard Dennison, manager of PFA's Farm Management Service. Dennison's office helps PFA members keep tabs on their production costs and incomes.

"To adequately compensate the farmer for his investment, there should be

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at least a \$1.25 spread between the farmer's price and his cost of production. Our \$8.56 figure includes cash expenses, building, equipment and depreciation costs, \$2 an hour for the farmer's labor and his family's labor, plus six percent interest on his equity."

According to Dennison's figures, feed costs account for approximately 35 percent of the cash expenses, and feed is up 20 percent over a year ago. Labor, which accounts for 10 percent of the cash expenses is up by about 20 percent, and fertilizer costs, which are about 12 percent of a dairy farmer's cash expenses, have doubled in many cases.

Costs have clearly skyrocketed in recent years, as evidenced by another set of PFA figures. In 1967, the cost of producing 100 pounds of milk increased about 10-

cents over the 1966 cost, and stayed at that level until 1970, when it went up another 15-cents. A 30-cent increase was posted in 1971, and another 30-cents was tacked on in 1972. In 1973, though, costs rose by an astounding \$1.20 over the year before, and this year it costs \$1.00 a hundredweight more to produce milk, according to PFA tabulations.

"No wonder dairy farmers are upset," Dennison said. "We felt we presented data that was more than adequate to justify a price increase at the October hearings. But we were cut down, and I think the real reason we were cut down is consumer pressure. The administration didn't want consumers to hold Washington responsible for higher milk prices."

The hearing Dennison referred to was held in

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Lebanon Co. DHIA Holds Annual Meet

Lebanon County Dairy Herd Improvement Association members filled the large meeting room at the Tulpehoeken Church on Wednesday evening for their 45th annual meeting.

The dairymen present witnessed the presentation of production awards to eight of their fellow members. They also heard from Lebanon County Dairy Princess Ruth Miller, and reports from associate county agent Newton Bair, DHIA state director Alfred Brandt, and DHIA state fieldman Earl Baum. The meeting was conducted by Harold Bollinger, president of the county association.

Isaac Zimmerman, Lebanon R3, received an award for his herd's average production for the past 12 months. Zimmerman's 16-cow herd produced an average of 696 pounds of fat and 16,653 pounds of milk.

Seven other county DHIA members had butterfat averages which topped 600-pounds per cow. They were: Dale Hostetter, Annville R2, whose cows averaged 658 pounds of fat; Harold Bollinger, Newmanstown RD1, 657; Abram T. Lefever, Jonestown RD1, 624; Robert Martin, Myerstown RD2, 618; Hershey Bare, Lebanon RD2, 611; Raymond N. Getz, Myerstown RD3, 610; and Edwin E. Funck, Jonestown RD1, 606.

In his report, Newton Bair told the members that their association had increased

from 5183 cows in 1973 to 5442 in 1974. The average milk production per cow in 1974 was 13,722, compared to 13,294 for the previous year, and 12,848 state-wide in 1974. The value of the milk produced by the average Lebanon County DHIA cow in 1964 was \$665 over the cost

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Farm Land Tax Measure Approved by Legislators

A bill permitting preferential tax assessment on plots of agricultural or undeveloped land was passed unanimously Tuesday in the House.

The measure, intended to give farmers a tax break and help preserve the state's open spaces, goes on to Gov. Shapp who is expected to sign it.

For months, the legislation was delayed by disagreements between state farm organizations and environmental groups, who questioned whether the bill's provisions would deter development of farmland or simply provide tax advantages for farmers.

The final version is a compromise between the original positions taken by both sides. It would im-

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Jane McSparran, RD2, Peach Bottom was selected to represent the Solanco FFA for the coming year when she was named the FFA Sweetheart.