

Feed Situation Outlook

Feed grain domestic disappearance in October-December 1974 was 46.3 million short tons and exports were 9.3 million tons, each 18 percent below a year earlier. Thus, disappearance has begun to decline in line with this year's smaller supply. Reductions will continue in order to stretch supplies until the 1975 crop harvests this summer and fall. Total feed grain sup-

plies for 1974-75 were 188 million tons, 21 percent smaller than last season. Domestic use for feeding is projected at 123 million tons, a fifth less than in 1973-74, and exports are projected at 34 million tons, down 24 percent.

Feed grain prices have declined from last autumn's highs due to the sharp reduction in domestic feed grain disappearance. Feed

costs have been high in relation to market prices of livestock, poultry, and dairy products. Also, the possibility of record feed grain production in 1975 tends to hold prices down. Export demand continues at a strong pace. But as supplies are used up, substantial price fluctuations are possible.

Unfavorable feed cost-product price relationships have sharply reduced the number of cattle on feed over the past year - to 26 percent fewer on January 1 than a year earlier - and have forced hog producers to curtail production; as of December 1 they said they would have the smallest spring pig crop in 40 years. Because of relatively short time spans required to feed poultry and hogs to slaughter weights, October-December broiler and egg production were 8 percent and 3 percent, respectively, below a year ago, and pork production has recently begun to run below a year earlier. These reductions in production have not yet resulted in much price strength for the products, and feed cost-price relationships continue below those that have encouraged larger output of livestock and poultry in the past. In spite of the reduction in cattle feeding, beef production is running ahead of a year ago because of heavy slaughter of cattle off grass, and this is expected to continue throughout 1975. Recently, fed cattle prices have declined relatively more than corn prices.

October-December 1974 feed grain usage for food, industrial, and seed was slightly more than a year earlier. The volume used for these purposes is less sensitive to price changes than is feed usage and is expected to total about 18 million tons

in 1974-75, about 3 percent more than in 1973-74.

On January 1, farmers had planted or expected to plant about 4½ million more acres to grains, soybeans, and upland cotton (combined) in 1975 than in 1974, and intended to shift some acres among the crops. The biggest shifts indicated (on a U.S. basis) were a reduction in upland cotton acreage of 4.4 million down to 9.5 million acres and an increase of 4.1 million in soybean acreage to 57.7 million. Intended corn acreage of 77.4 million was down 0.3 million from 1974, and oats acreage at 17.5 million was down 0.6 million. Intended sorghum acreage of 19.4 million was up 1.7 million and intended barley acreage of 9.8 million was up 0.7 million. If these plans are carried out, farmers would plant about 124 million acres to feed grains in 1975, only 1½ million more than in 1974.

Given average planting and growing conditions in 1975, the plantings in prospect would produce a record corn crop, and production of all feed grains could exceed 1974's 165 million tons by 25 to 40 percent. Feed grain prices may moderate enough to encourage expansion in feeding industries. But if poor weather strikes the crops again, small supplies and exceptionally high prices would continue to have serious repercussions on U.S. livestock industries and on grain exports.

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State civil service examinations for many positions are open continuously. Before submitting an application, contact the State Civil Service Commission or visit a local Pennsylvania State Employment Service office where applications are available. Be sure the examination program is open before you apply.

Letters to the Editor

NFO Backer Speaks Up

Editor: Upon reading your editorial concerning the wholesale slaughter of animals in the midwest, I was truly appalled to see that you have mistakenly placed the blame where it did not belong. It is true that some of the original calf kills were attended by NFO members, but not organized by NFO. The farmer has dug himself into his own hole, by being satisfied with whatever he was given when selling his product thru the local market or local coop. Finally, after years of this type of financial disaster for the American farmer the NFO comes along and gives them a chance to collectively bargain together for better prices.

What does the majority do? They turn their backs on what might be the only hope for them or the whole country. Agriculture is still the backbone of this great country, it's something we can't do without.

Now is the time for the American farmer to reach out to his fellow neighbor and join to collectively bargain for his products, whatever they are. There is no greater challenge ahead of us now the economic rehabilitation of this country, and the farmer has to meet that challenge head on, by placing true value on his products and bringing the consuming public back to the reality that we feed them.

I am a twenty six year old dairy farmer in New Jersey and have been amazed at the attitudes of those around me. They are completely convinced that nothing ever can be done to upgrade our

markets, to a level of at least cost of production, plus a reasonable profit. The time has come for those dissatisfied with their markets to react, and take decisive action. "Action" is the key word. The NFO wants 30 percent of our American production to reach a price setting goal, but only action on every farmer's part will achieve this. If we don't accomplish these goals, we can look for continued decline in prices paid to farmers. As everything around us goes up in price, why should all of us be taking less? It is time for action now.

In closing I hope that you will print my response in your paper. It seems that you offer a very fine assortment of agricultural related articles, but in the future I would urge you to bring more reality, and express the true efforts of the National Farmers Organization. For they are showing the way in collective bargaining.

Donald K. Shinn
Columbus, N.J.

Questions 17c Hides

Either Gerald Charles, NFO publicity chairman, was wrong, or the sale of a cow-hide at 17-cents a pound was fixed, or the hide market varies about 10-cents a pound between here and Perry County.

On Saturday, February 8, 1975, we received our returns for the sale of 32 steer hides. We netted 5-cents per pound from Frys of Lancaster.

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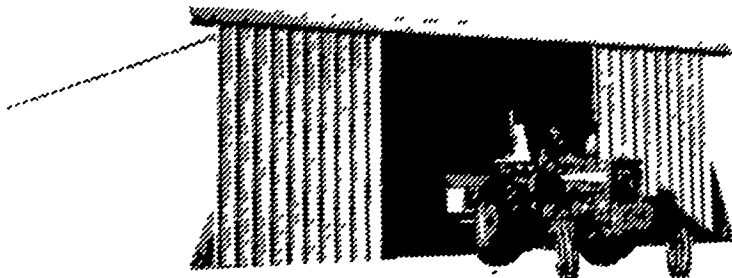
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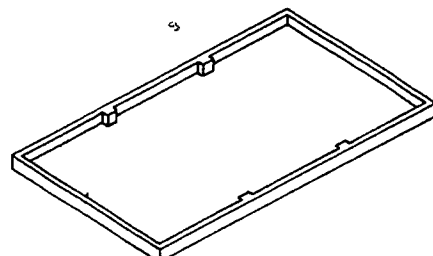
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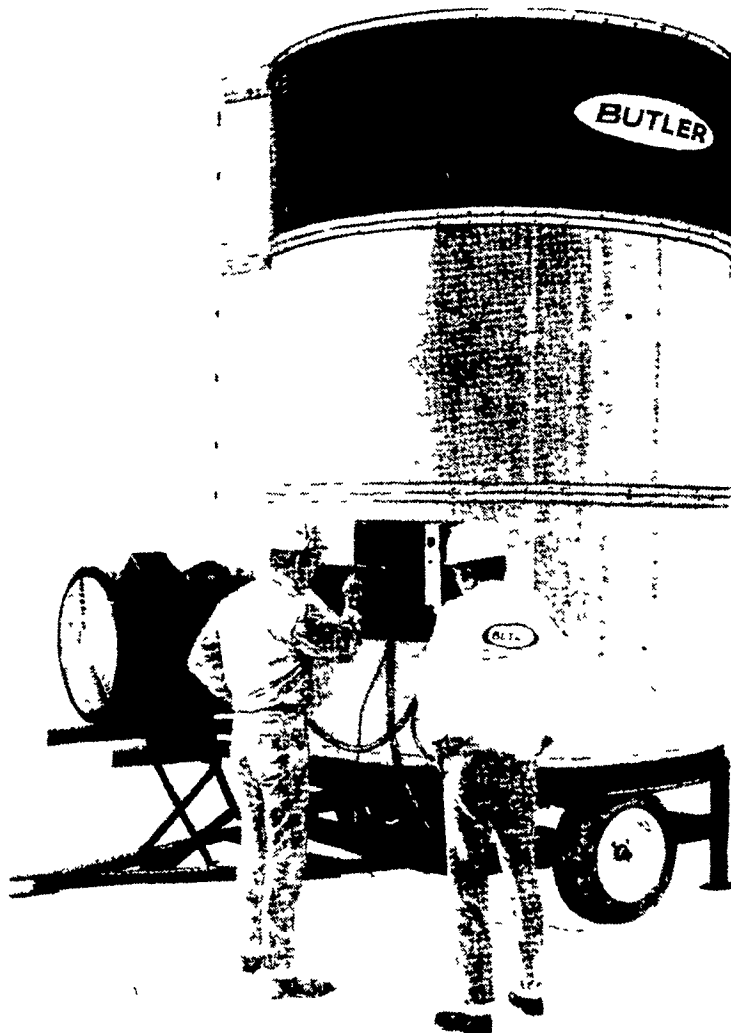
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