

# Lancaster Farming

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Cathy and Eckert Erb, Millersville R1, hope their idea for a mini-farmer cooperative catches on here. An organizational meeting has been

planned for Friday, March 21 at 8:00 p.m. in the Coca Cola Bottling Plant in Lancaster.

## “Mini-farmer” Hopes To Start Co-op Here

by Dick Wanner

A place in the country, with enough space for a few chickens, maybe some goats, and certainly a huge garden ... it's a dream shared by many suburbanites and city dwellers. It's a dream that includes space for the kids to play and to get to know nature, honest-to-goodness work for children, perhaps a tumble-down farmhouse with "potential". Not many of the city cousins who dream these dreams, though, ever come close to realizing them.

But Eckert and Cathy Erb are living their dream. And loving it more every day. Two-and-a-half years the Erbs sold their home in East Petersburg, a Lancaster suburb, and moved to a 30-acre "mini-farm" near Millersville. They're finding that the things they've gained from country living have more than made up for the things they left behind.

Instead of a comfortable, modern suburban house, they now live in a restored farmhouse, with modern conveniences but a patina only age can bestow on a dwelling. The neighbors are no longer close enough to whisper at, but the friendships formed in East Petersburg are still strong.

And many of their old friends visit them more on the farm than they did in town. The new neighbors are farther away, and it took longer to get to know them, but they've found the surrounding "big farmers" all pleasant and helpful. And, especially in the beginning, the Erbs needed all the help they could get.

A mini-farmer, especially one who farms more for fun than profit, does have a special set of problems. These are problems of scale. A feed dealer doesn't want to deliver a ton of feed. A grain broker doesn't want to bother with the half-ton of surplus corn the mini-farmer can't feed to his hogs, the cattle trucker doesn't want to stop for one or two steers. Faced with these frustrating problems, the Erbs began discussing them with other families like themselves, and they found a

lot of people in the same boat. They invited a number of these people to their homes one evening, and the outcome of that meeting just might be the first mini-farmers' cooperative in the country.

"That gathering was really different from what we were used to where we lived before," Mrs. Erb said when Lancaster Farming visited the Erb house on Monday afternoon. "Before, people always wanted to know where everybody worked, what their titles were, and how big their house was.

"The night we had the group here, nobody cared. I don't know where any of

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### NOTICE

New LANCASTER FARMING subscription rates of \$3.00 for one year and \$5.00 for two years will become effective March 1, 1975.

This increase has been made necessary by sharply rising costs of postage, newsprint and production.

## Bankers Look At New Liquid Manure System

Ag bankers from Lancaster and surrounding counties were given a tour on Thursday of a new manure handling system which its makers say can save farmers time and money, help keep them from running afoul of increasingly stringent environmental regulations, and preserve more of the plant nutrients present in cattle, hog and chicken manure.

The system, called a Slurrystore, is manufactured by A.O. Smith, the same firm that makes the

familiar blue Harvestore structures. The unit on the Myers farm sells for about \$18,000, the bankers were told, and can store about a three month supply of manure from the farms 140-head dairy herd and small beef operation. Manure is scraped daily from the barnyard into a reception pit which holds a six-day output. Milk house wastes also go into the reception pit.

Every six days, the reception pit is emptied into the bigger, open storage tank. In the process, all the

solids are thoroughly mixed with the liquids into a slurry. Before the tour, the group

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Ron Kreider, Manheim R5, has been active in many farm youth activities including FFA and 4-H work.

### Ron Kreider

## Young Manheim FFA Member

Ron Kreider is a young man whose interest in farming has been keeping him quite busy. A junior at Manheim Central School, Ron has been a member of the FFA at Manheim for the past three years. He has served the Chapter as news reporter and has been chairman of the public relations and recreation committees.

Ron's interest in many phases of agriculture has led him to take project work in numerous areas such as

dairy, market hog finishing, beef finishing, capons and field corn.

Along with his project work, Ron has been on the FFA parliamentary procedure team and has been involved in public speaking often speaking on the food shortage and work of the farmers.

Ron has participated in the livestock judging competitions at the county level and has attended the national FFA leadership

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## Dairy Day Program Details Announced

The 1975 Lancaster County Dairy Day program begins at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 4, at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center, according to N. Alan Bair, associate Lancaster County agent. Master of ceremonies for the day's program will be Donald L. Hershey, a Manheim farmer and president of the Lancaster County Farmers Association.

The program will kickoff with a slide presentation on money returns from an effective mastitis control program. Dr. Samuel Guss, Penn State's extension veterinarian, will talk about new developments in mastitis control.

Guss' presentation will be followed by a panel discussion on dairy farm financing. Jay Irwin, associate Lancaster County agent, will moderate the panel which will consist of Stanley Musselman from National Central Bank, George Lewis, Farmers First Bank, Carl Brown,

Fram Credit Association, and Roy Geisman, Farmers Home Administration.

Preceding lunch, Lancaster County dairy princess Diane Crider and her popular friend, "Marvy Moo", will share the spotlight for a few minutes. Lunch will be available for \$1.75 per person.

After lunch, Jane Alexander, Pennsylvania's deputy secretary of agriculture, is sure to have an attentive audience as she delivers a speech entitled, "The Great Milk Mystery, or Who's Responsible for What?"

Mrs. Alexander will be followed on the speaker's platform by Marlowe W. Hartung, president of a Lancaster Advertising agency which bears his name. He'll talk about the facts and fictions of product advertising effectiveness. Hartung will be the last speaker, with the program expected to adjourn by 3:00 p.m.