

# Lancaster Countians present testimony at Meadville hearing

MEADVILLE — Two Lancaster Countians, Forney Longenecker of Lititz and Alfred Overly of Quarryville, testified at the congressional hearing held here last month to present their reasons for higher milk prices.

Overly, who has been operating his own farm since 1959, is a former employee of New Holland Machine Company and a member of the Pennsylvania Farmers Union.

Longenecker is organization director for the Pennsylvania Farmers Union. Following are excerpts from their statements before the dairy and poultry subcommittee which has scheduled hearings in various parts of the country to determine the need for higher milk prices.

Longenecker: "What I'd like to bring out in my testimony is that the dairy farmer is quitting. Some are getting bigger, yes - but if you drive in the rural areas you will see that the farms are slowly deteriorating - there are no more cows and weeds grow around the buildings. In most cases the land is still being farmed, but not always.

The farmers in rural America have lost faith in our government. I asked many of our members to attend this meeting. They said, "What's the use? They'll listen to you, but they won't do anything about it anyway."

So let's get on with the job. Let's get this support price up to at least 90 percent of

parity, which is what the law says it may be. Let's not let imports in that depress prices below 90 percent of parity."

Overly: "What I'd like to bring out in my testimony is something that greatly concerns me - How in the world can young farmers start farming today? And worse yet, some that should start farming aren't even attempting it.

Presently my son is a senior in high school and would like to continue to farm. If my son wants to start farming on his own, or any young farmer in fact, he's going to have to borrow money at 10 percent. To buy a farm, he'll have to pay at

least 5 times the amount I paid for my farm. In fact, buying one is out of the question. A decent herd of cows to start out with would cost in the neighborhood of \$30,000 to \$40,000. Machinery prices, in the last year, have increased from 20 percent to 60 percent.

And here we are, and here you are listening to us, wanting to know why we should have higher prices for our milk!

What I tried to bring out in my testimony is this: - It was possible for me to start farming the way I did. What alarms me is there is no way a young farmer can start farming today the way I did

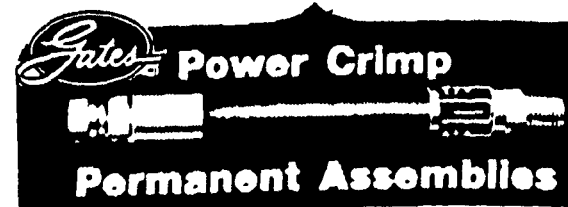
in 1956. There is no reason at all why milk can't be at 90 percent of parity, the way the law provides. I personally think it should be at 100 percent. As you are aware, farmers can't turn off the cows the way industry can lay off their men.

If present conditions don't improve, more farmers will be forced to quit. I think the consumer is aware that there is no such thing as cheap food. Everything has a price. The fact is that if they want to be furnished milk at a steady price you will have to raise the support price to at least 90 percent of parity."

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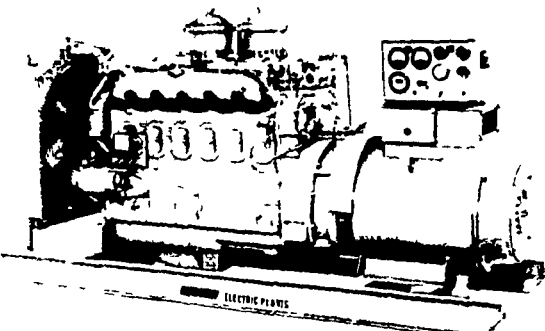
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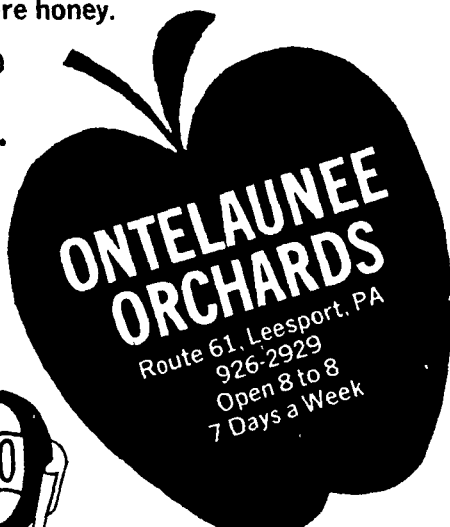
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