

## Apple program in trouble.

John Barton, Stewartstown orchardist and chairman of York County Farmers' Association's Fruit and Vegetable Marketing Committee, has joined the Apple Advisory Committee for Pennsylvania Farmers' Association Cooperative Marketing Association PACMA.

He reported to the March meeting of the County board of directors that the apple program is the only PACMA branch in trouble. Although York County apple growers support the commodity membership, there is not enough tonnage represented from the major apple producing counties with which to bargain for processing apple prices.

The role of PACMA has been to recommend prices for processing apples and grapes; to offer vegetable contracting assistance, to sell spent hens from a central sales desk; to order buy feeder cattle and pigs, and to conduct group marketing of its Penn Best commodities from farmers to consumers.

As far as apples have been concerned, in the past, supply and demand have been the sole determiners of price. "This leaves farmers at the mercy of unstable

markets," contends Barton. "For lack of support, the PACMA Apple Committee is reduced to an information outlet instead of a viable price negotiator," he stated.

As a result, both farmers and consumers suffer from the highs and lows of an unstable market. When

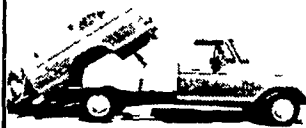
prices are too low, the producer pushes out trees, because he's been losing money with too many apples glutting the market. Eventually, that production cutback affects supply driving up the consumer price to a point prohibitive to a reasonable consumptive level.

Barton hopes to gain the support of growers from Adams and Franklin Counties where high volume producers could have some real effect on the PACMA program to help both consumers and fruit growers in the future.

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