

Pa. herd health problems monitored by computer

HARRISBURG - A system of computers and video terminals now in use at the Pennsylvania Agriculture Department's Bureau of Animal Industry will provide fast service for livestock farmers and save up to \$70,000 in record-keeping costs.

"This is government service at its best," Agriculture Secretary Raymond J. Kerstetter

noted during a recent visit to the Summerdale regional office where the system was unveiled. "By incorporating the latest in electronic technology, we can keep close track of livestock herds within the Commonwealth to pinpoint problem areas and forestall potential epidemics."

The electronically streamlined animal health service could be an economic

help to herd owners by providing quicker reactions by state officials to outbreaks of costly diseases.

"We are saving the taxpayers money in administrative costs and farmers money by reducing

threats to the health of their herds," said Kerstetter.

Video terminals were installed in April in the Department's seven regional offices and the main office in Harrisburg. The use of these terminals permits the

dissemination of up-to-the-minute findings of all tuberculosis and brucellosis animal testing. This information can be made immediately available to herd owners throughout Pennsylvania.

The terminals are connected to the Department's Univac 1110 computer in Middletown where information is stored. Personnel in the regions can type questions through the terminal, inquiring about a herd, specific animals, the herd owner or the veterinarian associated with the herd. Within seconds the pertinent data is displayed on the videoscope in front of the operator. This data permits regional personnel to assist herd owners in acquiring health certificates needed for the sale or showing of their animals.

Information stored in the computer pertains to the commonwealth's 50,000 herds of nearly two million

cattle, records of all animals and herds that have shown evidence of infectious disease, and the records of 900 accredited veterinarians.

Use of this system will replace manual file-keeping, enabling the department to save \$70,000 annually in clerical costs.

Messages can be sent to and from the regional offices and Harrisburg and, through the use of a printer, the messages can be recorded for subsequent checking.

The system was devised and implemented by the department's data processing staff, headed by Robert Mackrides, with Ronald N. Eide, as the systems analyst in charge. Dr. Everett E. Denlinger, director of the Bureau of Animal Industry, provided the technical logic for the system, assisted by Dr. John Dick, head of the bureau's Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Division.

Late payment charge boosted in western Penna. milk markets

After approval by cooperative associations representing more than two-thirds of the dairy farmers affected, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has amended the late-payment provisions of the Eastern Ohio-Western Pennsylvania federal milk marketing order. The changes are effective June 1.

H. L. Forest, dairy official in USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), said the amendment increases the late-payment charge to handlers from the present 0.5 per cent a month to one per cent a month. Forest also noted that the

late-payment charge will now apply on the third day the payment is overdue rather than on the first day of the next month. This means that payments by handlers to the market administrator, which are due on the 16th of the month, will now be subject to a late-payment charge if not made by the 19th of the month.

The amended order is based on the public hearing held in Cleveland last December at the request of Dairy Lea Cooperative, Inc. This cooperative represents a large number of dairy farmers serving the market.

Century farms honored

HARRISBURG - Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Raymond J. Kerstetter this week announced that the first certificates for Pennsylvania Century Farms were awarded by Governor Milton Shapp in a special ceremony in the Governor's Reception Room on Tuesday, May 4.

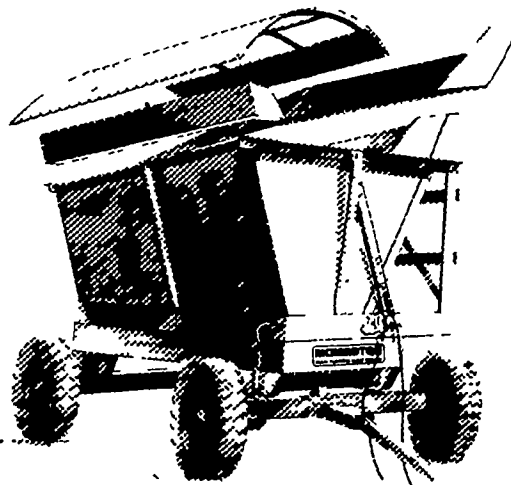
"The Century Farms Program is a joint venture of the Department of Agriculture, the Historical and Museum Commission, and the Bicentennial Commission," Kerstetter said. "The concept of recognition for farm longevity was developed by the Bradford County Historical Society in 1950. Since then, over 50 farms in Bradford County have been recognized. We intend, through this program, to emphasize the importance of family farms and the rural tradition to Pennsylvania's heritage."

To qualify as a Century Farm, the farm must have been owned by the same family for the last 100 years. A family member must live on the land. The farm must contain at least ten acres of the original holding or gross at least \$1,000 a year from the sale of farm products.

The certificates were awarded to Mark Glenn Hoch, Berks County; S. Evans Porter, Fayette County; James Bartley, Butler County; L. Ivins Smith, Bucks County; and Oscar Stroh and Mrs. Alice F. Stroh, both from Dauphin County.

Over 250 farm families have applied to this date. Applications are available through the Pennsylvania State Grange, Pennsylvania Farmers Association and the Pennsylvania Farmers Union.

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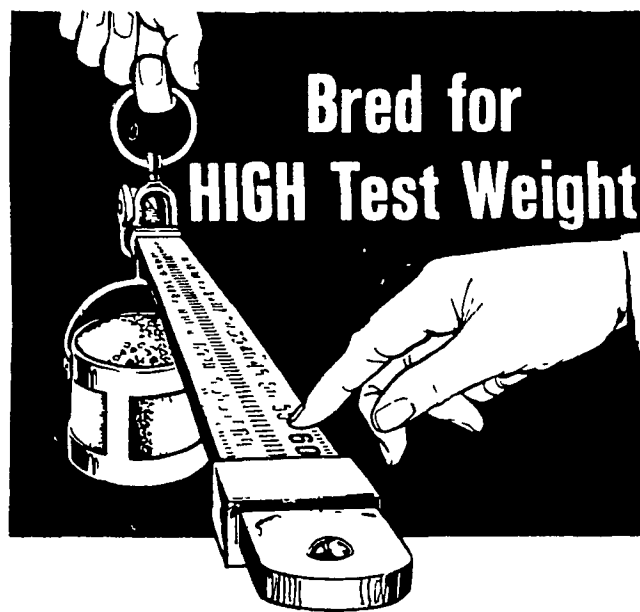
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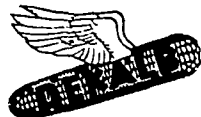
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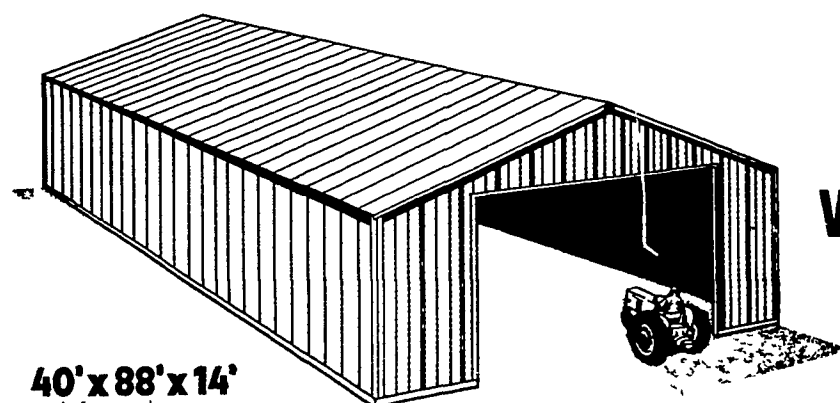
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