

ACA launches fact finding mission

WASHINGTON, D.C., - A nationwide fact-finding mission to "nail down specific solutions" to problems that affect the U.S. farmer and consumer will begin Nov. 15.

The effort, under the

sponsorship of the Agriculture Council of America, will involve farmers and consumers in 15 major U.S. cities during a four week period.

"We plan to nail down specific solutions - workable

ideas and plans that can be actively supported by both groups," according to ACA Chairman E.L. (Shug) Hatcher, a Lamar, Colorado wheat and beef producer.

Hatcher said five teams of farmers and farm wives representing "a broad cross-section of American agriculture" will each visit three cities to meet personally with municipal leaders, consumer and labor groups, people in the academic community and shoppers at grocery stores.

"We hope to involve as many people as possible in the search for specific ways farmers and consumers can work together," Hatcher said. "We expect that much of the focus will be on how to produce food at affordable prices, yet insure a fair income to growers."

The schedule for the farmer teams is as follows: Pittsburgh - Nov. 15-16, Albany - Nov. 17-18, Boston - Nov. 19-20; Kansas City - Nov. 15-16, Dallas - Nov. 17-18, Denver - Nov. 19-20; Phoenix - Nov. 29-30, Sacramento - Dec. 1-2, Portland - Dec. 3-4; St. Louis - Nov. 29-30, Chicago - Dec. 1-2, Minneapolis - Dec. 3-4; Atlanta - Dec. 6-7, Memphis - Dec. 8-9, Jacksonville - Dec. 10-11.

The tour represents ACA's most comprehensive effort to meet with consumers at all levels. All ACA programs emphasize direct "person-to-person" communication between farmers and city people. Among its programs are the "Farm Line," a toll-

free telephone bank, that lets people anywhere in the country speak directly with top decision-makers on major agricultural issues. The "City-Farm Swap" allows rural and urban families to learn about each other on weekend exchange visits.

The Agriculture Council of America, founded in 1973, is made up of individual farmers, farm and commodity organizations and companies that supply farmers. Its purpose is to improve communication between farmers and urban consumers.

SPF refers to very special hogs

EAST BERLIN, Pa. - During the early 1950's swine producers, university professors, and veterinarians joined together to study the problems regarding various diseases and their effect on efficient swine production. As a result of their efforts, the Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) swine organization was founded in the mid 1950's.

The SPF organization functions in eighteen states, largely throughout the Midwest, with central headquarters located in Conrad, Iowa. Breeders within the organization are dedicated to raising disease free hogs. All of the major breeds are included, as are all sizes of herds.

The original SPF pigs were taken by Caesarian process in laboratories and never came in contact with infected animals. As herds develop, animals may only be entered into an SPF herd from another SPF herd. SPF animals may be introduced into any existing herd.

In order for a herd to be accredited certain provisions must be met. All animals must be maintained behind double fencing, if kept outside. No individual may enter lots or pens without following strict sanitary precautions. In addition, animals must be slaughtered quarterly and the snout and lungs analyzed for atrophic rhinitis and enzootic pneumonia by the state laboratory. A veterinarian must visit the premises quarterly and certify that no external parasites or vibronic dysentery exist. He also must check the general health of the herd as well as various management practices. A proper vaccination program must be maintained for erysipelas and leptospirosis. Brucellosis validation must occur yearly. An annual visit by a representative of the national office is mandated.

Following each quarterly slaughter check and quarterly report, the breeder is issued a card which certifies his accreditation.

A York County farmer, Joel R. Stern, is the only SPF breeder in northeastern United States. Two other states in the eastern U. S., Georgia and South Carolina, have one breeder each. Stern has maintained his 20 sow registered Yorkshire herd since June of 1974. Most of his stock are sold for breeding purposes throughout Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Records concerning feed conversion and daily gain are kept for many of the animals at the Red Run Farm located at East Berlin, Pa.

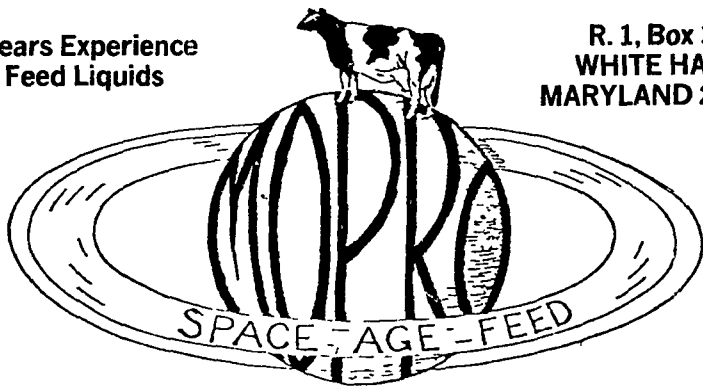
Stern is an active participant in the State and National Yorkshire organization. In January of 1976 he exhibited a boar and two gilts at the National Type Conference in Kingston, North Carolina. He showed the champion boar at the February state sale and the littermate champions at the March sale. At the August Pennsylvania show he displayed the champion boar.

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