



Ed Moshier of Lititz wasn't very experienced when he entered the poultry business five years ago. But he learned fast and takes great interest in the industry. Recently he became president of the Lancaster County Poultry Association.

Incredible

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encompass the entire industry. He became involved in the Lancaster County Poultry Association three years ago and was recently elected that organization's president. A firm believer in the Association, Moshier hopes to increase membership in the group in order to make it an even more effective organization. He noted that as of now less than half of the poultrymen in the County belong to the LCPA.

Lancaster County Agent Jay Irwin, who serves as an advisor to the LCPA, told Lancaster Farming recently that considering the importance of the Garden Spot's egg industry on a statewide and national basis, the LCPA should most certainly be a leader in the state and set an example for the rest of the Commonwealth. He pointed out that the County is consistently first in egg production in the state and that one per cent of all the eggs in the United States are laid here.

Another aspect of the poultry business Moshier believes in is advertising, research and promotion. "We desperately need this," he commented in reference to HR2000 which authorized the egg check-off program. Explaining his remark, the LCPA president said that the industry has "played the ostridge routine too long." He favors initiating a program which would enable the egg industry to go out and crow about the good qualities of eggs. With HB12000 passed, the way for extolling the virtues of "The Incredible Edible Egg" has been paved. Moshier hopes all those eligible to contribute will do so. "It won't work miracles," he said without hesitation, "but I hope that it will turn around the drop in egg consumption within the next two years. The egg industry has suffered staggering blows at the supermarket with fewer eggs being eaten every year. Much of this is due to the cholesterol propaganda. The egg people are now gearing up to promote their product and have a \$7 million dollar annual budget laid out for this purpose. Beginning January 1, 1977, advertisements will appear in national magazines as well as certain radio and TV markets. During some times of the year, commercials will be aired over national TV and radio.

"This program will also hopefully put all the local and regional egg associations under one blanket," added Moshier, who keeps 28,000 layers on his 12½ acre farm east of Lititz. Funding for the advertising, research and promotion program will come through the check-off program. Every producer with 3000 layers or more will have five cents of his earnings from every crate of 30 dozen eggs go towards the check-off program. Although there are provisions for producers to be able to claim a refund, Moshier hopes it will receive wide support. The money is collected by the first handler of the eggs and turned into the American Egg Board. Aside from the smaller flocks being exempt from participation, hatcheries are also outside the check-off program.

Irwin shared Moshier's view on promotion and advertising, expressing special hope that the AEB will cite the good qualities of its product. Having a variety of information at his fingertips, the poultry specialist pulled a study from his filing cabinet which showed how an increase in egg consumption in Japan resulted in a 14 per cent decrease in heart attack deaths. The study was done by the World Health Organization and showed Japan's egg consumption as having quadrupled during the study period.

On a more local level, Moshier gave examples of how the Lancaster County Poultry Association is promoting the industry among students and teachers. "The Association has had super good success from home-ec teachers," the egg producer exclaimed. Tours of poultry farms and processing plants have been popular projects in the past. The group is currently also preparing sets of slides and an accompanying prepared script for each school in Lancaster County. A third project are food booths at the Ephrata and New Holland Fairs.

According to Irwin, there are 1210 poultrymen in Lancaster County, with about half of them being involved with laying flocks. He believes their story should be told. At the Park City Farmers Week held in October, he prepared charts which illustrated the tremendous investments involved with egg farming. Penn State research was plugged into the cost formulas, while special considerations were made for Lancaster County conditions in particular. Total investment for 30,000 layers on a 100 acre farm was calculated to be \$370,000, or \$12.33 per bird. Flip that coin and the figures show that the farmer, processor and distributor share a gross profit of 8½ cents per dozen eggs. The retail store margin, however, is 14 cents per dozen eggs.

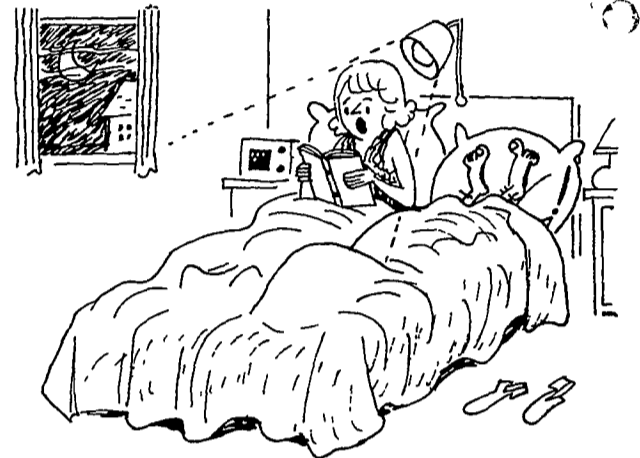
On the subject of prices, Moshier opinionizes that they're a bit high right now. He made the cautious remark due to the likelihood of encountering consumer resistance and a glut on the market in months to come. Then prices would sink too

low. Consequently, the LCPA president prefers to see prices stay a bit lower now in order to avoid subsequent drops.

"The industry should be able to police itself," Moshier remarked, "I wouldn't want the government to step in when prices are either low or high. A good poultryman shouldn't need a price support system. Prices right now could be shaved 10 cents across the board." At the same time, the poultryman pointed out that even with existing prices the price per unit of protein is still a bargain.

Irwin offered this observation: In 1950 the American consumer paid 22.2 per cent of her disposable income for food. Today that figure stands at 17 per cent. In spite of inflation and what have you, food is being put on the table at a more attractive cost than ever before. The simple reasons are improved technologies, and all-around management. The Extension agent noted that in 1950 the average hen laid 113.7 eggs per year. A decade later that figure was nearly doubled at 218, and since then the industry has hit a reading of 245 eggs per hen per year. "That tells us one thing for sure," said Irwin, "we're doing a good job in breeding and feed formulation."

Moshier's experience with chickens prior to buying his farm here five years ago was with approximately 50 Rhode Island Reds on his father's Northern N.Y. dairy farm. He came to Lancaster County as a student, and decided to stay to the area permanently some day. He has been doing just that ever since 1962.



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December 7 - U.G.I. Auditorium, 2121 Center Line Rd., Bethlehem.

December 8 - Neshaminy Manor Center, Rt. 611, Doylestown.

December 9 - Owen J. Roberts Vo-Ag Room, Rts. 23 and 100, Pottstown.

Speakers will be Penn State Extension Specialists: Donald Ace, Dairy; Gerald Bodman, agricultural engineer, and Dr. Lawrence Hutchinson, veterinarian.

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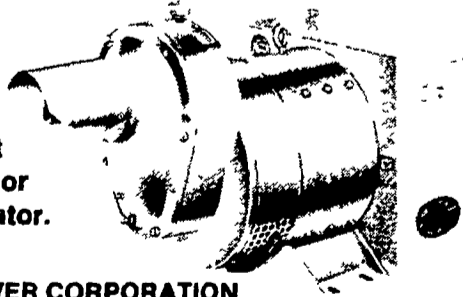


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