

# American ag

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continue along the route of market orientation, or we can return to government controls.

Memories are short. You all remember a few years ago when farmers were held back by government acreage controls. The role of the farm management specialists has changed with the changes in policy. Much of your farm management advice used to hinge around the government programs.

The first decision was how many acres to leave idle - then what combination of crops to grow within the program framework. In the old days you were in a holding pattern on decision making until the details of that year's farm program had been announced in Washington.

We're in a new era today. Your opportunity for farm management decision making has a much wider area in which to operate.

As we meet today's challenges, American

## Profits could be down

SMOKETOWN, Pa. - Profits for dairymen could be down slightly in 1977, but over all, it should still be a good year, says Boyd Gartley, director of public relations and communications for Inter-State Milk Producers Cooperative, Inc. The milk industry spokesman also said that farmers should concern themselves with the energy question.

Gartley made the remarks at the annual meeting of the Red Rose Dairy Herd Improvement Association, held here at the Good and Plenty Restaurant on Tuesday. He reminded dairymen that 1976 was an "up" year with regards to the dairy situation. He noted that dairy prices were strong in

1976, dairy sales were up and there was a dramatic development in the expansion for demand of milk products. He said booming cheese sales provided much of the increase in sales which resulted in fluid milk sales being slightly above last year.

He said milk prices have been above support prices since mid-July and that prices should average about \$1.00 per hundredweight more than last year.

He noted that part of the good production year for dairymen is the result of realizing gains from the genetic potential of dairy cows because overall cow numbers are declining.

Milk production, Gartley said after the meeting, will



Boyd Gartley

probably continue above average. He said the overall picture for dairymen looks good next year but profits could be down slightly with increased cost a probability. He did caution that there is potential for a surplus in 1977.

He also noted that per capita consumption of dairy products is the equivalent of 546 pounds of milk.

Gartley said, "We have out-produced the needs of the world in wheat, with one billion bushels in storage. There isn't a person with money anywhere in the world that's hungry." He added, "There is no food shortage, only a distribution problem, and distribution of money is a problem."

Gartley strongly urged the farmers to concern themselves with the energy problem, "because the farmer has the most to lose. Agriculture is in a venerable position and needs to be especially aware of energy."

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farmers and ranchers - and all of agriculture - must do a better job relating to the druggist on Main Street, and scores of opinion leaders in towns, suburbs and cities.

You, too, can be helpful in this task. Just as certain as Jimson weeds come up in the springtime, consumers are going to play an increasing role in shaping agricultural policy. Hence, it is vital that they - as well as other interest groups with increasing clout - become well informed.

I believe a number one item on the agenda of agriculture is to help create greater understanding of agriculture. Explain what an operation farm really is. What it takes to make one go - or not go. We need to separate the wheat from the chaff on a myriad of other key issues.

Who are the most effective people in telling this story? Farmers themselves. Farm women. Members of your profession are especially qualified to speak up effectively about agriculture, too.

It's a real opportunity; indeed, a responsibility.

If there is any one thing that I believe after having moved to Washington and worked three years in the Federal government, it is that the government of the United States is responsive to what it believes to be the wishes of the people.

The key to that statement is the word, believes. If any group of people - consumers, farm managers, rural appraisers, businessmen, students, farmers, or any other group - feels strongly enough about an issue to contact their congressmen or the executive branch of government and voice their opinions, they will be heard. Their feelings, if well considered and articulated plainly, will be influential, too.

But it's not enough just to write one letter to your congressman or senator or secretary of agriculture and then forget it. Your responsibility is deeper than that.

Keep up with the issues of the day. Follow

through on your recommendations, your criticisms, and your compliments. Don't make your communication with government a one shot deal which follows after the fact. Get ahead of the game and keep your representatives at all levels of government informed of how you feel before an issue comes up for a vote.

All of your communication should not be negative either. It's the easiest thing in the world to dash off an angry letter to get things off your chest - and effectively transfer the blame for poor government. The only way this nation's government can go off base is if we, as citizens, let it. This is true in farm policy, and many other public policy areas. We have to strive to learn about our government's strengths and weaknesses, then work through and around them.

A farm manager or a farmer can "tell it like it is" better than any Assistant Secretary of Agriculture or big corporation president.

I urge you to get involved. Speak up and speak out. Consumers, union members, supermarket owners, urban and suburban politicians and scores of others are interested in what you have to say on a subject which concerns everyone.

Just how interested is exemplified by an article in the November 21st issue of the Sunday New York Times. The fact that enrollment in this nation's agricultural colleges more than doubled - 41,800 to 98,200 in 11 years captured the attention of big city newspaper editors.

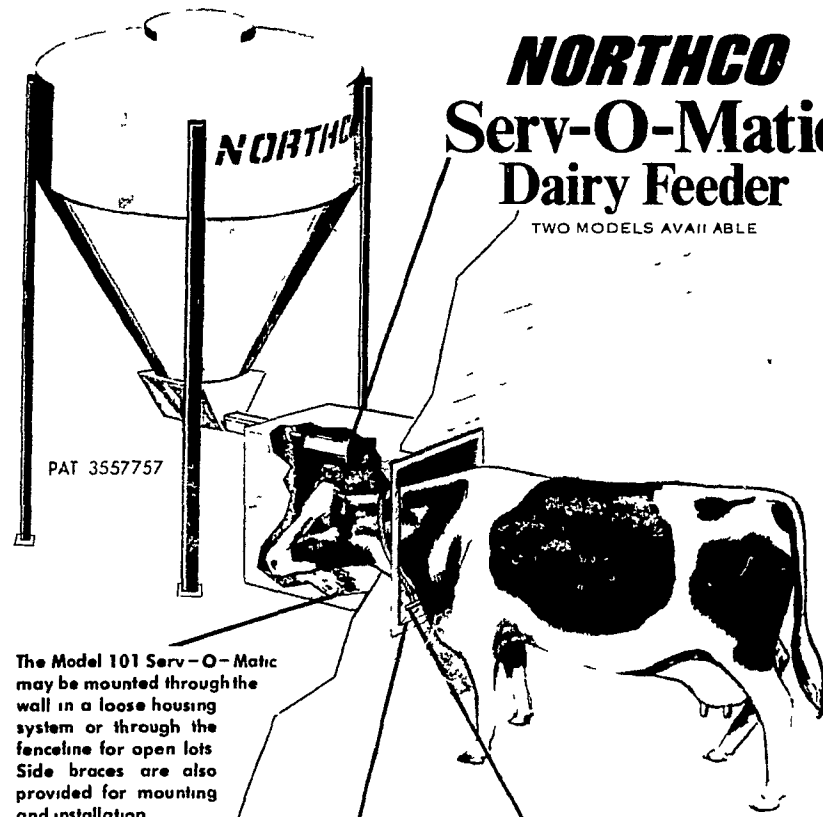
This important story, which in itself shows that agriculture is in the center ring of attention, did not appear on page 84 either.

It appeared on page one. Agriculture will be page one news for a long time to come. I urge each of you to speak up. So consumers, politicians, farm organization leaders and others can really understand what farming is all about.

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