

Elwood Houser

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Tri-County Pork Producers organization; has served as director and vice president of the Pennsylvania Yorkshire Coop Association; is on the executive committee of the Pennsylvania Swine Coop; is a board member of the Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council; was a director of the Lebanon County Farmers Association for two years; and has served as secretary, vice president, and president of the Cedar Crest Young Farmers Association of which he is a charter member and now serves on various committees.

Other organizations to which he belongs include: American Yorkshire Club, Lancaster County Swine Producers, National Pork

Council, Pennsylvania Farm Show Committee, American Holstein Assn. Lebanon County Holstein Assn. Pennsylvania Young Farmers Assn., Pennsylvania Farmers Assn., and 4-H, in which he is a club leader. He is also active in his church, the Midway Church of the Brethren.

In defense of his activities, Houser says, "I've always enjoyed being active and I feel it's beneficial to get involved, because there's always something new to be learned." He also admits that his activities keep his so busy he can have meetings scheduled every night for two weeks straight during the height of organizational meeting season.

Houser, at age 38, has been in farming for 29 years now,



Elwood Houser injects this pig with an iron shot. Houser has been a purebred Yorkshire breeder for 25 years, and last Thursday won national recognition as one of 34 Pork All Americans from across the United States.

Pickings were slim in 1926

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Those so-called "good old days." Were they really that good? Maybe not - at least for farmers. Fifty years ago, for example, farmers harvested 99.7 million acres of corn, got an average of 27 bushels per acre, produced 2.7 billion bushels of corn over - all. They got less than 74 cents a bushel for it on the average.

Last year, they harvested 71.1 million acres of corn, averaged 87.4 bushel per acre, produced a total of 6.2 billion bushels over - all, and got an average of \$2.37 per bushel.

Back in 1926, oats was our Number Two grain (there were, after all, 5,740,000 horses and mules on farms to feed). Thus, the farmers of 1926 harvested 44.2 million acres of oats, got an average of 28.3 bushels per acre, wound up with 1 1/4 billion bushels over - all. They got

an average of 39.8 cents a bushel for it.

Last year, U.S. farmers harvested 12.4 million acres of oats, averaged 45.4 bushels per acre, produced 562 million bushel over - all. They averaged \$1.53 per bushel for it.

Farmers harvested 1.66 million acres of tobacco in 1926. They got an average of 783 pounds per acre. Total production was 1.23 billion pounds. Prices averaged 18.2 cents per pound. Last year, they harvested 1.0 million acres, averaged 2,032 pounds per acre. Total production was 2.1 billion pounds. Prices averaged \$1.12 cents per pound.

Now, on net income per farm. Back in 1926, just 2.29 pounds of the farmers had \$5,000 or more; 5 1/2 per cent received \$3,000 to \$4,999 per farm; 62 pounds netted under \$1,500; nearly three pounds showed losses of \$500 to \$1,000 for the year.

although he has only been in business for himself since January of 1976 when his father retired and dissolved the partnership they had had for 10 years.

"I'm always learning he says. "You never stop learning in this business," he continues when explaining some of the management practices he employs with his animals. He believes that a good feeding practice is a must and he has learned through a trial and error basis that it is best for him to feed his animals four pounds a day when they are on pasture.

His housing and equipment facilities include a concrete block farrowing house which contains 14 pens, 6 x 12 feet. The pigs are then finished in an open front building, and are also fed out in the bottom of a barn and in an old hog shed.

Houser likes to market his

animals between 210 and 230 pounds, which is generally at six months of age. Most of his animals go straight to the New Holland Auction where he has his dimes taken off for use in promotion.

He also raises 70 head of steers, and has 133 acres of corn, 15 acres of alfalfa, and 25 acres of barley and wheat. The remainder of the 230 acres which he rents from his father is in pasture.

Prior to the dissolution of the partnership, Houser and his father had also run a purebred registered Holstein dairy. After the dispersal sale, however, Houser bade that part of the business goodbye for a while, although he has all the facilities available should he choose to start the business up again. He prefers raising livestock because he says it gives him more time to work out in the fields.

While Houser has been

raising Yorks for 25 of his 29 farming years, he first began with beef and dairy. His "start" came at the age of nine when he took a 4-H baby beef project.

He was active in three other clubs at the time, but his main emphasis was the beef, which he was involved with for six years. His first real interest in swine began in high school, however, when he joined the Future Farmers of America. Starting out in dairy with a Sears chain calf, he got his first Yorkshires during his second year of FFA. "And, I've been going with Yorks ever since," he says with a smile.

During his years with the Future Farmers of America, he earned "nearly every award you could get," and

culminated his efforts with the American Farmer Degree in 1959. He also won the Dekalb Award and was a delegate to the American Institute of Cooperatives Convention in Raleigh, N.C. At the time of the American Farmer Degree, he was mainly involved with dairy.

Asked about what he sees in the future for the hog market, Houser answered that he predicts a better market late in the year, and especially in the beginning of next year. At present, disease problems are killing off baby pigs; herds are decreasing; and the tail end of the heavy production from last year's high market price is coming to slaughter, so there is a definite production cut back which should make a good market in the coming months.

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