

Penna. gearing up for metric system

HARRISBURG - The people who regulate standard weights and measures make up the oldest consumer advocate operation in existence, according to Kent D. Shelhamer, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Agriculture. "Most people take accuracy of weights and measures for granted, but it

actually takes many thousands of man - hours by our department personnel each year to inspect, test and checkweigh items offered for the consumer, to insure that accuracy."

Shelhamer said that the Bureau of Standard Weights and Measures made over 28,000 inspections during the

fiscal year 1975-76, which resulted in outright savings of over \$200,000 for the Commonwealth's consumers. In addition, the bureau's inspectors checked thousands of large and small scales, tank and LPG meters, gasoline pumps and bulk milk tanker calibrations during the same period, resulting in even more savings for producers and consumers.

The theme for this year's Weights and Measures Week, held earlier this month, reflected the national Metric Conversion Act of 1975, which provides that each sector of the economy will convert to the metric system at its own speed, based on its needs and limitations. Some signs of this changeover are already evident.

The conversion to metric provides a number of opportunities for the careless consumer to go astray, with some confusion coming from suspicions that producers are using the change to metric sizes to conceal price increases. Shelhamer says that it's not a matter of producers knowing all about the metric system and using it as an entry into the consumer's pocketbook.

Manufacturers are in a learning process, too, and a wrong decision involving a cent or two per unit could spell economic disaster for them.

Many familiar measures will be affected by the change to metric. Weather reporters are already giving temperature readings in both Fahrenheit and Celsius. Manufacturers are marking

the weight of their products in both grams and ounces. Road signs in some parts of the country are giving distances in both kilometers and miles.

Mail rates will soon be based on grams rather than ounces. Clothing sizes will be measured in centimeters. Carpeting will be sold by the square meter and television sets will be measured in centimeters. Speed limits will be expressed in kilometers per hour and gasoline will be sold by the liter. A 220-pound man will be weighed in at 100 kilograms.

With all these changes, Shelhamer says that once people get used to the metric system, measures will be much simpler. "The system that we've been using is so complicated that it's a wonder we have been able to cope with it. Our system for measuring length has six basic units, none of them related in any reasonable manner. In fact, most people couldn't tell you what the six

are: inch, foot, yard, fathom, rod and mile.

"Our system for measuring mass is almost as bad with five basic units of measure: grain, dram, ounce, pound and ton. And worst of all is our system for measuring volume with nine basic units: fluid ounce, teaspoon, cup, pint, quart, gallon, barrel, peck and bushel."

The metric system has only one basic unit for each type of measure: the meter for length, the gram for weight, and the liter for volume. "The fact that the metric measures are related to each other in multiples of ten is the key to the system's simplicity," Shelhamer says.

The conversion to metric is a challenge to the Bureau of Standard Weights and Measures, according to Shelhamer. "Our job is to protect consumer and producer alike. The benefits of the metric system will greatly outweigh the rough spots in conversion."

Turkey conference set

GETTYSBURG, Pa. - Turkey producers and processors will meet here next Wednesday for the annual NEPPCO Turkey Conference. Scene of the activities will be the Sheraton Inn, starting time is 9:15 a.m.

Following is a schedule of the program.

9:15 a.m. Conference Registration - Lobby

10:00 a.m. Health Clinic - Practical tips for the prevention, control or cure of pullorum, MG, MS, and other turkey diseases - Dr. L.D. Schwartz, Penn State.

10:45 a.m. "New Products Showcase" - Manufacturers Representatives will "show 'n tell" a half dozen or more new products for turkey producers.

12:00 noon Showcase Reception - Provides attendees the opportunity to ask questions, obtain prices in the convivial atmosphere of a pre-luncheon reception.

12:30 p.m. Luncheon - Annual Business Meeting - NEPPCO Turkey Division.

2:00 p.m. Update on the Outlook for '77 - Lew Walts, Executive V.P., National Turkey Federation.

2:45 p.m. Coping with Double-Digit Inflation - H.C. Jordan, Penn State.

3:15 p.m. Open Forum - A different kind of panel presentation where the panelists may ask more questions than they

answer and the audience may provide more answers than questions. Everyone will have an opportunity to participate...and all may learn something in the process.

4:15 p.m. Conference Adjourns

Rishels on top again

YORK, Pa. - Rishels Edlyn Farm of York exhibited a first prize Angus bull at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colo. The bull, Hedgerows New Criterion, is co-owned with Bill Rishel and family of North Platte, Neb. In his only previous outing, New Criterion was selected grand champion at the 1976 Nebraska State Fair. Following his exhibition at the National Western he was sold in the Angus bull sale and was one of the high selling bulls when he went under the gavel at \$13,000 to Comega Cia of Buenos Aires, Argentina for two-thirds interest and full possession. A maternal brother to New Criterion exhibited by Rishels Edlyn Farm was reserve bull calf champion at the 1977 Pennsylvania Farm Show.

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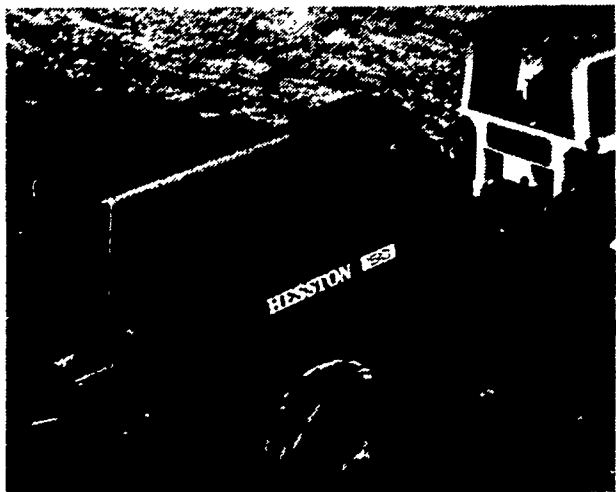
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