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First hay looks good, but quantity down



Lancaster Farming photo by Dieter Krieg

The first hay in the area looks good, according to most accounts gathered Wednesday and Thursday by Lancaster Farming. Eleven farmers in six counties were interviewed. Quantity may be down a bit so far, but quality is generally high. The bugs aren't much of a problem in most areas, however a few reports told of

significant infestations. Although rain is usually frowned upon when there's hay to be made, most growers are wishing for some showers to improve crop prospects. Making the rounds, above, is Earl S. Weaver of New Holland. Details of southeastern Pennsylvania's hay story may be found on page 22.

Improved cattle market sets numbers record

LANCASTER - A feeling that current cattle prices are peaking, coupled with a holiday on Thursday, combined to give the Lancaster Livestock Yards a new record for the number of cattle sold in one day.

Prices at Lancaster County auctions are in the low 40's for choice cattle and producers are wanting to take advantage of it. Prices have been comparatively good all this month, and the highest since last December.

The holiday which may have contributed to the Stockyard's run of 1649 head on Wednesday is Ascension Day. Mennonite and Amish cattle producers, as well as some others, stayed away from markets on Thursday for that reason, therefore possibly picking Wednesday to ship their cattle. Some proof of that theory can be seen in the fact that the New Holland auction on Thursday was down to 800 head from

its more usual 1300. Vintage was up by 300 head on Tuesday.

The Eastern livestock

market is considered to be favorable right now due to it being lower than the Midwest. Buyers are coming

here to fill their needs. Demand is good. Some cattlemen may be skeptical of prices remaining where

they are and decided to move their cattle before they drop, according to some market analysts.

One Lancaster County auction operator, however, does not think beef prices [Continued on Page 29]

Poultry industry facing challenges

By DIETER KRIEG

LANCASTER—Egg producers are entering some real challenging times, according to Gary Anderson of the Ralston-Purina Company. The egg-feed ratio (the number of pounds of feed equal in value to one dozen eggs) currently stands at 6.8, which is down from last year's 7.3 figure and a five year average (1972-76) of 7.0.

Anderson made the comments during an information-packed poultry business management seminar held here on Wednesday. Organized and presented by the Ralston-

Purina Company, the day-long event was attended by 180 interested egg producers.

A pretty good demand for

eggs is seen by the Purina representative, who cites an expanding economy and rising consumer incomes as reasons for the favorable

demands. He also notes that the trends are likely to continue.

Poultry production is increasing, despite a drop in

numbers of 40 million layers since 1970. This year marks the first year that the trend has been reversed. [Continued on Page 30]

Tobacco planting beginning for season

By JOANNE SPAHR

NEW HOLLAND, Pa. - Tobacco seedlings raised under plastic are now mature enough to be transplanted in the field. And, according to community members in and around the New Holland area, planting of these specially incubated plants began as early as two weeks ago in a few rare instances. However, in most cases, tobacco farmers were just beginning to put the crop out early this week, with most having 1/2 to two acres planted by the middle of the week.

For the most part, this planting is two or three weeks earlier than for growers who raise their seedlings under muslin.

In most cases, the beds

were sterilized in the Fall and the tobacco seeds planted in late February or early March with a plastic incubating cover placed over them.

Experienced tobacco growers say that sterilizing the bed in the Fall and using the plastic cover go together, because the land seems to hold more moisture when

sterilized in the Autumn than when steamed in the Spring.

However, plastic is "risky business," according to tobacco farmers, since one [Continued on Page 29]

Ice cream standards may change

HARRISBURG - Agriculture Secretary Kent Shelhamer last Friday issued a call to the Food and Drug Administration in Washington to hold hearings

on proposed final regulations regarding ice cream standards scheduled to become final on June 13, 1977, if no hearings are held.

Shelhamer said his

Department was the first in the nation to call for such hearings which would determine, among other things, whether a substance [Continued on Page 30]

F and H scholarships bestowed

By JOANNE SPAHR
LANCASTER, Pa. - Twelve nursing school or college bound seniors left the Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, last Tuesday evening feeling more

financially secure than when they arrived. Those 12 individuals, who are planning to study either agriculture, home economics, or nursing in a higher education institution of their choice, were

all winners of the 1977 Farm and Home Foundation Scholarship awards.

Chosen on the basis of their financial need, scholastic achievement, and leadership [Continued on Page 26]

Dairy Issue deadline: May 31

On June 4, LANCASTER FARMING will recognize the area's dynamic dairy industry with its Annual Dairy Issue.

We extend a special invitation to dairy groups and organizations, as well as individuals, to submit articles and news on dairying for the Dairy Issue.

To be sure you make the Dairy Issue, please submit all advertising and editorial material by Tuesday, May 31. Call us at 717-394-3047 or 717-626-1164. Or write LANCASTER FARMING, Box 266, Lititz, Pa. 17543.