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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Farmers are shortchanged

Editor, Lancaster Farming:

The letter from Jon Jantzen published in your July 16, 1977 issue under the heading "Grain Storage Advocated" is unfortunately blind to the needs and interests of the farmers who do and who alone can produce the grain that everyone else must have.

We appreciate and sympathize with Mr. Jantzen's and the Mennonite Central Committee's concern for the hunger problem. I'm sure they are completely sincere and well meaning.

However, it is a pity that those who worry about

hunger overseas don't get better information and give fair consideration to the needs for economic justice for our own farmers - who they expect to feed the world every time there's a pinch.

The farmers' mission in life is to feed the hungry. The pharmaceutical companies' mission is to manufacture medicine to heal the sick. Both are "good causes". I'm sure no one ever expects the big drug companies to make medicine unless they get paid for it so they can pay union wages to their workers, attractive high salaries and big bonuses to

their executives, and high profits to their stockholders. But here Mr. Jantzen never gives a thought to what the farmers are getting - or will get under the new farm bill for their labor, management and investment.

Well, what are farmers getting for their work and worry and investment and risk?

Right now farm prices are lower in comparison to prices and costs of things farmers have to buy than any time since March 1933 - right at the bottom of the Great Depression.

Right now average farm prices give the farmer little or nothing for his labor, and far less than the average businessman as a return on the farm investment. Many farmers right now don't even recover their "out-of-pocket" cost of production.

The new farm bill now being passed by Congress is just a shade better than what the Carter Administration recommended - which would give farmers \$2.67 an hour for labor - the bare minimum wage, amounting to only a poverty-level income - and only 1 1/2 percent as a return on their investment in land.

How can those who worry about hunger in other countries ignore the injustice of keeping American farmers down to a poverty level? American farmers are getting about the lowest prices, and the lowest levels of price support from their government of any farmers in any country in the world.

The new farm bill also gives Congressional sanction to the principle of the Carter Administration's "reserve" program, which Mr. Jantzen praises for helping protect the hungry overseas against shortages of food.

The "joker" for farmers in this grain reserve plan is that it will not protect farmers from the price-depressing effect of surpluses.

The "special farmer-held reserve" plan Mr. Jantzen mentions, and which has been given all the publicity, will account for only a few hundred million bushels of the total "surplus" of grain. There will be more than three billion bushels of grain on hand out of this year's and earlier crops when this marketing year is over and a new harvest is ready to start in 1978. Another big crop in 1978 will make the burden of the surplus outside the token little "special reserve" much worse still.

Some of this "surplus" outside the special reserve will be stored at the farmer's own expense - if and so long as he can get along without income with which to pay his bills. But farmers who have to have ready cash will have

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### Hogs, grain to be

#### topics of YF meeting

ATGLEN, Pa. - Farmers are concerned about depressed grain prices. Some are considering feeding their corn to hogs or beef cattle. Others are planning to build storage and drying facilities to hold grain until prices are more favorable.

A meeting has been scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 1 at the Octorara High School Vo-

Ag Room, Route 41 about 1 mile south of Atglen. Enter the school at the "Receiving" sign, and proceed to the ag room to the rear. Farmers are invited to attend.

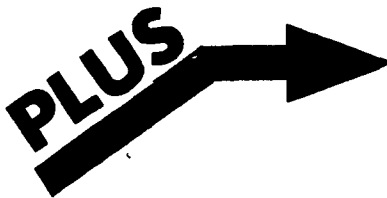
Penn State agricultural economist, H. Louis Moore, will discuss "Grain Outlook" and "Hog Outlook". Dwight E. Younkin, Penn State swine specialist, will discuss "What's Involved in Feeding Hogs?"

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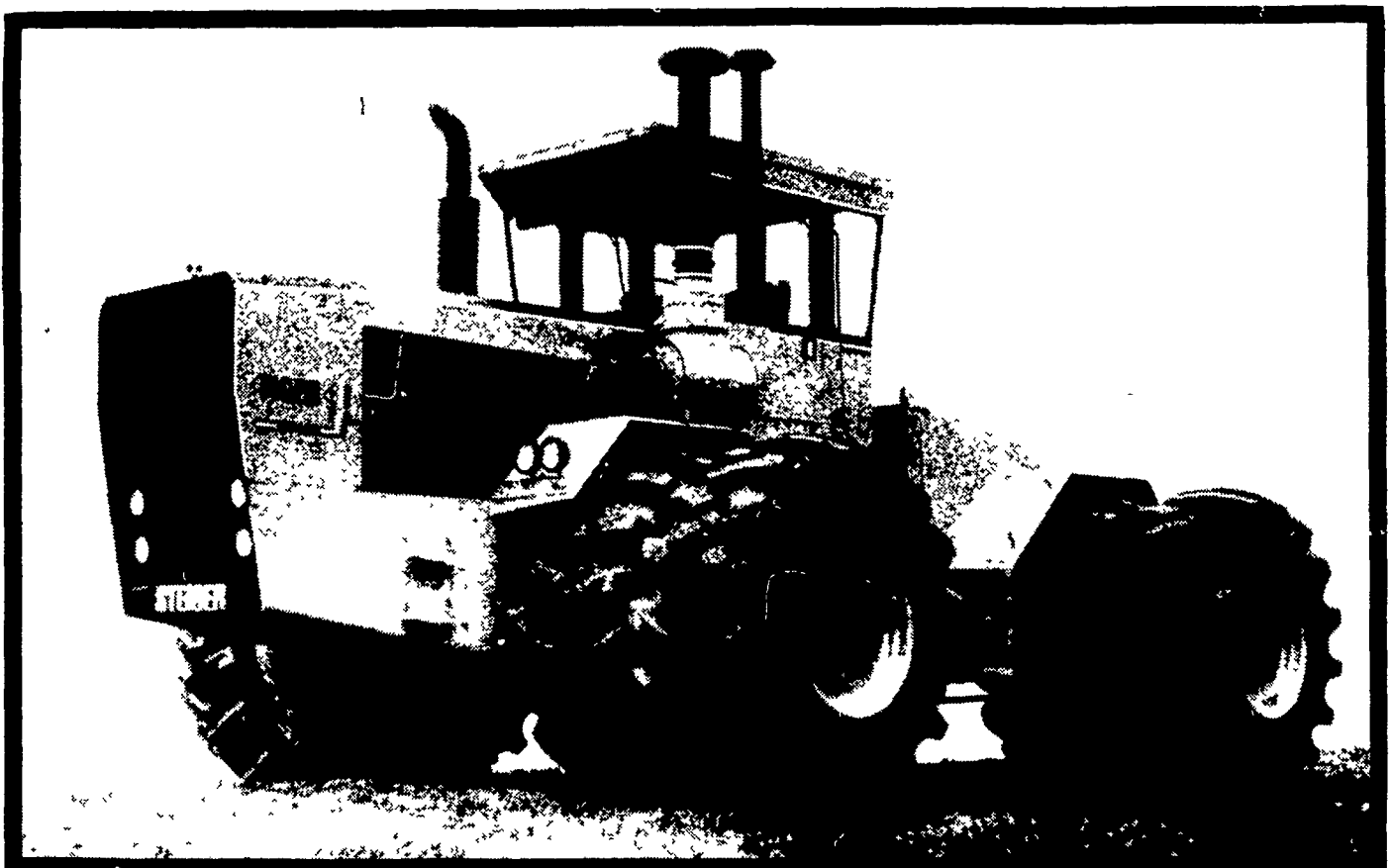
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