

Energy curtailment foreseen for agriculture

Co-op seminar scores programs and challenges

GETTYSBURG - Farmers and agriculture in general will be faced with significant changes in production and marketing practices as the result of new energy conservation measures, but these changes will occur slowly, according to Donald A. Frederick, assistant general counsel for the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

Frederick was speaker at a tour and seminar for of-

ficials of the Pennsylvania Association of Farmer Cooperatives and The Pennsylvania State University College of Agriculture held here last month.

"Farmers will be forced to cut down on the use of machines and petroleum and pay more attention to the timing of fertilizer and pesticide application," he said. "And, agribusinesses will have to devise new

methods of processing fertilizer products and develop better uses for livestock wastes."

Frederick pointed out that incentives will prompt farmers to conserve energy. He cited as an example tax credits for solar crop drying.

The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives representative said that consumer representation on cooperative boards will take place in the future and interest groups will push to lift the tax-exempt status of cooperatives.

George Steele, president and board chairman of Agway, Inc., also a conference speaker, noted that the farm cooperative sector must first understand their own problems before they try to work effectively with the general public and legislators.

"The farm community spends too much time telling each other about problems of the industry rather than working effectively to solve them," Steele said. "We as cooperative members must establish a sound program of cooperative education for consumers. And farm organizations must learn to listen to people's viewpoints outside of agriculture."

Charles F. Lebo, program specialist for the Pennsylvania Department of Education, stated that the state has the largest vocational agriculture enrollment in history. Over 16,000 secondary school

students in 200 vocational or technical schools are enrolled in agricultural programs.

Lebo urged the Pennsylvania Association of

Farmer Cooperatives to work closely with teachers of vocational agriculture in developing new programs for youth.

Dr. Jack H. Armstrong,

deputy administrator of the Farmer Cooperative Service, Washington, D.C., pointed out that his agency

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Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland visited Hesston Corporation headquarters here recently to learn firsthand about the problems created for farm equipment manufacturers during a sagging farm economy. Secretary Bergland (white shirt at left) talks with Hesston officials near a new conventional square baler which Hesston introduced this year. Rep. Dan Glickman, D-Kans., accompanied Bergland on the tour and arranged the Hesston visit by the agriculture secretary.

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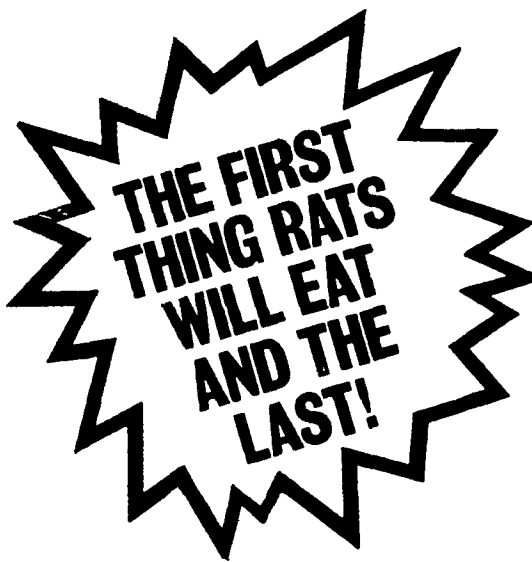
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