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Farm strike generates sympathy, little action

By DIETER KRIEG
LITITZ - Talk of a nationwide farm strike on Dec. 14 is generating much sympathy, but very little active support from farmers in

southeastern and south-central Pennsylvania. The cause of the desperation attempt for better prices is a sagging farm economy which has left

wheat farmers in particularly poor straits. Midwestern grain farmers are spearheading the drive and have been openly threatening to go on strike on

Dec. 14 if their demands for higher prices are not met by then.

Observers feel that the strike will do little more than call attention to the plight of

farmers in general and grain farmers in particular. Very little chance is being given to the possibility of having wheat prices raised to 100 per cent of parity, which is what the wheat growers are demanding.

Support for the cause, other than talk, can't be easily found in this part of Pennsylvania, especially Lancaster County, where ethnic and religious backgrounds play strong roles in marketing procedures. As one travels north or west, however, the number of supporters grows significantly. Still, active support is relatively small and the net result is that eastern portions of the country will be nearly out of the picture when and if the strike goes into effect.

Other reasons for the threat of a strike not taking a real foothold here is that farmers and farming in this area are a different breed from the variety found in other parts of the country. Aside from their heritage, farmers here are more diversified and can spread their profits and losses over several commodities. Also, this is largely a grain consuming area, rather than grain producing. Except for those few individuals who are primarily in cash grain, farmers in this part of the country are comparatively well off. Even the most sympathetic observers of the farm strike admit that. They also point out, however, that grain farmers have a justified cause for dismay and are in fact in genuine financial trouble.

Although the strike is not yet in effect, it's been in the

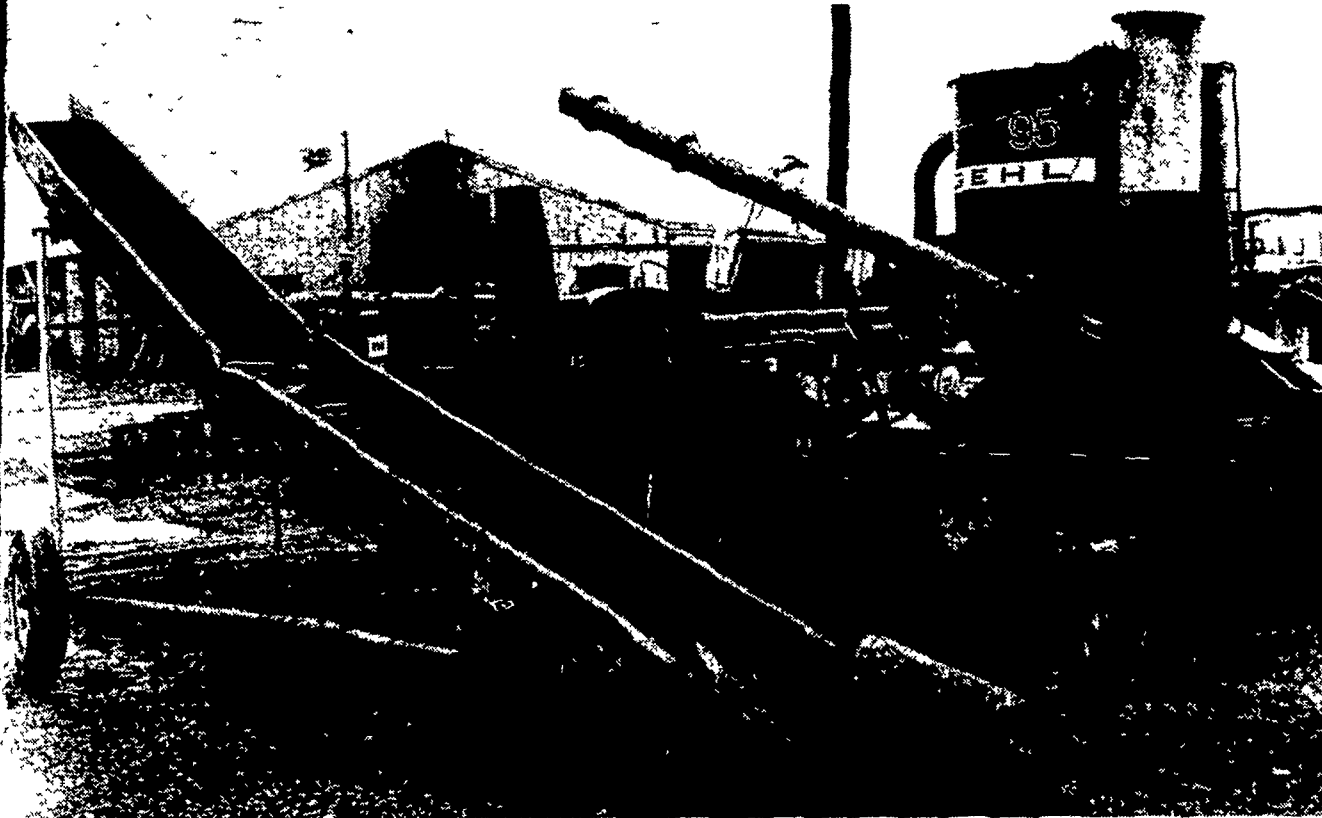
news for several months, and the headlines generated by talk of a farm strike are believed to be very beneficial to agriculture in general.

Paul McPherson, New Park, believes that so far the organizers of a strike threat have "at least done a good job of calling attention to problems that are very real to all of agriculture. They have certainly done more harm than good, but I question whether they really believe they can get 100 per cent of parity, or whether they even think they should get 100 per cent of parity."

On the latter, it is interesting to note that few farmers in this area believe farm prices of 100 per cent parity are justified. The state's largest farm organization has a history of opposition to such a marketing program, basing its stand on the belief it'll do more harm than good. They have an awful lot of company across the country. Consequently, organizations such as the American Farm Bureau Federation have taken no official stand on the issue.

Individuals differ however. A western Pennsylvania grain farmer who belongs to the American Farm Bureau is giving the strike cause 100 per cent support. The individual, who prefers to remain nameless, admits to having done well in the past. Among other achievements, he flies his own airplane and is a Master Farmer. This past year, however, has been rough on him and he doesn't think it's

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Although farm machinery and equipment hasn't been moving very well in some parts of the country, businesses in this part of the country are giving good to excellent reports. Both used and new equipment is selling well. For 1978, the

situation is expected to favor farmers since there'll be plenty of equipment available and implement dealers, as well as manufacturers, will be competing strongly to make a sale.

Farm machinery sales strong

By DIETER KRIEG
LITITZ - Farm equipment sales have remained steady to excellent, according to reports from various implement dealers in south-central and southeastern Pennsylvania. The news comes despite some regional and national news reports which claim that declining

farm income is hurting farm machinery sales.

Although several of those contacted expressed notes of caution for the coming year's sales activities, the overall consensus for 1977 bordered on excellent and 1978 is expected to be a good year as well. Farm machinery dealers see

buyers as being more selective and will try harder than ever to win their business. It may be a farmer's year.

Price increases, however, are a different story. They can be expected to rise in one way or another despite attractive sales offers. Price increases may be disguised,

but they're there, and won't stop coming. For the most part, price adjustments are made just once a year. Sometimes twice. Nobody expects anything like the hectic activities of 1974 when equipment was scarce and prices were changed every few months.

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Sheriff does fine, pays \$35 per pound

GETTYSBURG - The highest price paid in the history of the Pennsylvania 4-H program was set at the annual Adams County 4-H Capon Round-up when a premium of \$35 a pound was paid by Adams County Sheriff Bernard Miller for this year's grand champion capon. The nine pound capon

was exhibited by Darlene Resh, Dillsburg. Miss Resh, a 10 year 4-H member, is currently the Adams County Poultry Queen and last week represented Pennsylvania at National 4-H Club Congress, Chicago, as the state's outstanding 4-H Poultry member.

The first reserve cham-

pion capon was exhibited by Roger King, York Springs. The 10 1/4 pound capon was sold to Adams County Home Beverage for \$5.50 per pound. Adams County Home Beverage was the contending bidder on the grand champion capon and purchased a total of seven capons at the sale.

Sue Shetter, Gettysburg, exhibited the second reserve champion capon, weighing 9 1/2 pounds and going to Carl Frantz for \$4.75 per pound.

John Bream, chairman for this year's show and sale reported six 4-H members participated in the round-up

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Land use takes farm input, say some

By JOANNE SPAHR
LITITZ - "Living with an interstate highway on one side of us, a development on another, and an industrial park planned for a third, we are really faced with the issue of farmland preservation," said one interviewee.

"We just had 10.7 acres of our prime acre age con-

demned for a sewage plant," said another. "So, the question of land use is really relevant to us right now."

And, still a third said, "We've been battling zoning for a long time now just to establish our own winery - all I can say is, there has to be an easier way for farmers to expand their businesses."

The above three com-

ments were typical of the remarks made by farm women interviewed this week on the topic of farmland preservation. Land use and saving the family farm is an issue that is on nearly everyone's minds right now, for one reason or another. However, has anyone come up with a solution?

The answer to that question is "no", although many people have opinions as to how farm land can be saved.

For Mrs. Leroy Bupp, Seven Valleys, the answer is a simple two-word phrase - "get involved."

"Government control scares me," Mrs. Bupp

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