

LMA urges riddance of P & S rate regulations

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The Livestock Marketing Association (LMA) is urging that the Packers and Stockyards division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture eliminate all regulation of marketing service rates and charges,

saying that this concept is "outmoded, antiquated and outdated."

In testimony at seven hearings on alternatives to the present P&S program of rate regulation, officials of the marketing sector's leading trade group stress

that "No one in today's livestock marketing sector enjoys a monopolistic position." The current concept of regulating marketing businesses like public utilities, they say, is no longer valid.

The LMA officials say there are "over 2000 posted stockyards, nearly 14,000 registered dealers, and a variety of other methods, in the form of cooperatives and otherwise to merchandise cattle."

And, they point out, today "livestock markets handle less than 45 per cent of all livestock volume and merchandising transactions. This strongly suggests that the monopolistic tendencies which prompted the 1921 (Packers and Stockyards) Act no longer exist, and rate regulation is no longer required."

The trade group, which provides business services to some 1200 livestock marketmen, dealers and brokers in the U.S. and Canada, is testifying that "livestock marketing businesses, like the vast majority of small businesses of this country, should be permitted to operate in a free and competitive open environment."

"Our entire economic system is based upon the concept of freedom of choice. A livestock producer may choose from a variety of marketing alternatives, including selling at posted stockyards."

"In other words," the officials are testifying, "if left alone to operate in a free and competitive fashion, livestock marketing businesses will respond in accordance with the dictates

of the marketplace in a business-like fashion and in a competitive manner." Rates and charges, LMA says, will be based on the economic unpredictability of a free market.

Furthermore, the officials say, "If a livestock marketing business chooses to price itself out of business, it has the constitutional right to do so, although it would be foolish to suggest that any prudent marketing

businessman is going to do so."

The testimony also notes that there is a "congressional movement afoot to eliminate tariff regulation" of posted stockyards, through the "Freedom in Livestock Marketing Act," introduced last November by Sen. James O. Eastland, (D-Miss.) and the various bills introduced by Rep. Ray Thornton (D-Ark.)

4-H conservation club to organize

LANCASTER — The 4-H Soil, Water, and Wildlife Conservation Club will hold an organizational meeting on February 22 at the Shutz House Environmental Center in the Lancaster County Central Park. The meeting, originally scheduled for February 8, was rescheduled due to the bad weather.

Anyone interested in learning more about preserving the environment and conserving the soil and Wildlife resources is welcome to join. Club members will help plan

activities and work on a project of their choice. The club will meet every other week for six meetings.

Leaders for the club will be Scott Eberly, Ephrata, 717-733-7876; Bill Franz, Lancaster, 717-569-6889; and Tim Breneisen, Conestoga, 717-872-5665; who can be contacted for further information.

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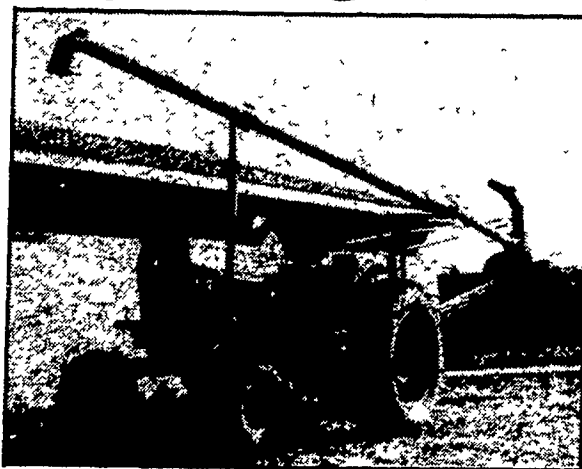
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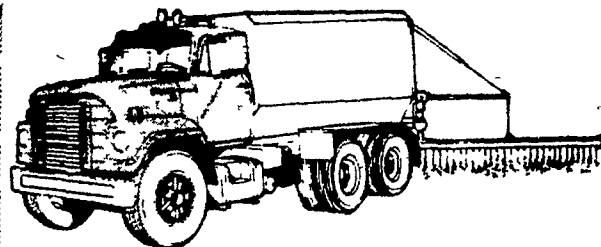
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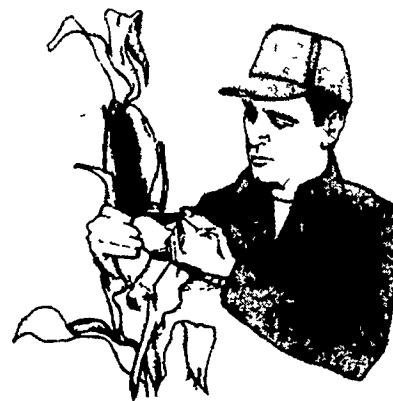
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