

Home grown opinions on hog producing given

By JOANNE SPAHR
LANCASTER — A panel of five swine producers and specialists presented their views on the hog industry, Tuesday, as part of the Lancaster County swine day. On that panel were Henry Gruber, head buyer for A & B Packing, Allentown; Franklin Feeser, purebred Hampshire breeder for Taneytown, Md.; Robert Kimble, director of the meat animal evaluation center at

Penn State University; Ronald Harrison, Littlestown; and Dwight Younkin, Extension swine specialist at Penn State. Gruber spoke to the assembled group of swine producers on how to market livestock effectively in Lancaster County. "Within a 150 mile area of Lancaster County 50,000 hogs are slaughtered per week," Gruber informed the industry men. "Ten to 15 per

cent of the national kill is slaughtered in your back yard." Around Lancaster County there are 10 to 12 major markets for swine including



Ronald Harrison

packers, stockyards, auctions, and some dealers. So, says Gruber, "there is probably no place in the state with a better marketing set up than you have." According to Gruber, the best method of producing hogs for marketing in this area, as in any given area, is for the grower to develop hogs the market desires. "You, as a producer, also need to get to know your buyer," advised Gruber. "Let him know how many hogs you have to sell each week or each month. If he knows your system, he can better fit your hogs into his buying channel. He won't take you over the coals—we



Henry Gruber

all know the market, and if that happens too often, there would be plenty of other buyers to take your hogs." Purebred producer Ronnie Harrison answered the question, "What criteria do you use for choosing herd boars, and what type of animal does best in your confinement operation?" Harrison, who runs a complete confinement operation, says that right now he is buying his boars for next Summer, and that by July and August he likes to have boars that are 10 to 14 months of age rather than those that are two years old. According to this breeder, the younger boars are more aggressive and more active than the 2-year-olds. He also pointed out that he does keep some "good, old sows" which he breeds to top boars with a well tested background, because "we

intend to keep the gilts out of these good old sows." Frank Feeser, a breeder from Taneytown, Md., feels that each producer must know what he wants in his



Robert Kimble

herd as well as "where he's going and why he's going there." "What I hear is that the commercial man wants a healthy hog, a sure breeder, a sound hog, but most of all—an honest breeder," stated Feeser. In his herd, the Maryland breeder strives for a long necked sow, with a flat top and high tail setting. He also wants them tall at the shoulders with good length of body. Feeser also believes in breeding with big framed, long-sided, deep rib caged boars. "If you want something, you have to go out and get it," states Feeser. "You should get a boar that's a little longer than your breeding stock," he noted. During a question and answer period, Henry Gruber was called upon to give his opinions on how much room for swine expansion remains in Pennsylvania. "I'm always concerned with a bull market," admitted Gruber, "but, I think



Franklin Feeser

there's still room for expansion in the state." The hog buyer gestimated that perhaps 20 to 25 per cent of all hogs slaughtered are killed in Pennsylvania. In a later discussion Harrison expressed his concern that the purebred industry is going to extremes in one direction. "Extremes can be taken too far," he stated.



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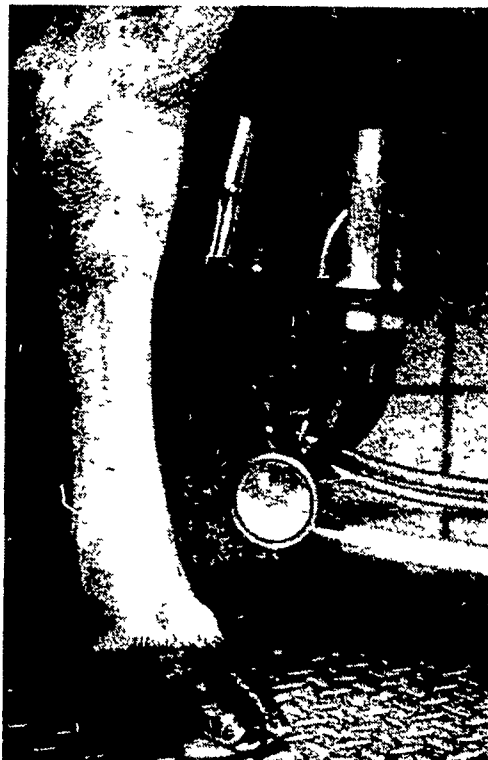
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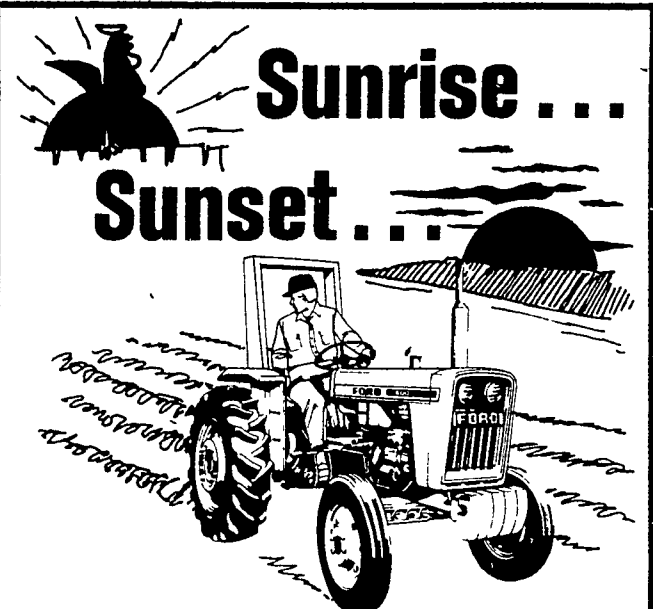
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