



More than 800 acres of Adams County farm land have been purchased by two West German poultrymen. Facilities for a million-bird egg opera-

tion will be constructed on this site. Ground was broken early this week.

Germans start egg farm

(Continued from Page 1)
 chased from William Spicer for \$900,000.

Lancaster Farming visited the scene during the middle of this week and found Werner Gross, a graduate engineer of agriculture from Grambek, West Germany, busy removing old barbed wire fences which had become lost and entangled in weeds. Working bare-chested and in shorts, the 41-year old engineer carried the tan and muscular build of a youthful farmer. In actuality, Gross is a consultant for farming investments and his work brings him to all parts of the world. It was he who selected the Adams County site for the two West German poultrymen.

According to Gross, final settlement had not been made as of Wednesday afternoon, but he felt secure enough to begin with the ground breaking. A huge earth mover stood at the scene. Several acres of the gently rolling land had already been cleared. The holdup for final settlement are minor technicalities, according to Gross, and he fully expects the deal to go through.

Final settlement was made Thursday afternoon, it was learned.

The two West German poultrymen who are bringing their money and expertise to this country are Paul Schockemoeller and Rainer Lammerding. Both have extensive knowledge in the poultry business and are reportedly well financed through a number of business interests in West Germany.

Schockemoeller and Lammerding have formed a corporation in Germany which is known as AMGRAR Their American egg farm will be known as Pennsylvania Quality Eggs, Inc., according to Gross who speaks fluent English and is well acquainted with agriculture in the United States. He has worked in this country on numerous occasions.

The poultry farm is

expected to be in full operation by about next year, Gross said. Building permits were issued several weeks ago, according to John Schwartz, Adams County agricultural agent. The estimated costs of construction were pegged at slightly over \$2 million. Hershey Equipment Company, Inc. of Lancaster will handle the building and equipment orders. The Hershey firm handles Big Dutchman poultry equipment. According to Gross, one of the German poultrymen handles the same line of equipment for European and Mid East markets.

When completed the large poultry farm will include 12 chicken houses, each of which has a capacity of 80,000 birds. Eight other houses are in the plans for growing replacement pullets. Gross hopes to have enough completed by this Fall to have at least a portion of the farm in production.

AMGRAR purchased more than 800 acres of land and is reportedly looking for 200 to 300 more acres in order to have a good buffer zone between their concentration of poultry facilities and neighboring areas. This is not unusual, says Schwartz, who specializes in poultry matters for the Adams County Agricultural Extension Service. The extra land will minimize manure handling, odor, environmental and security problems. Also, the acreage will allow for expansion, should that become feasible.

Current plans are that AMGRAR will lease the land to Donald Hershey, owner of Hershey Equipment Company Hershey, in turn, is expected to sub-lease the acreage out to farmers who will keep the land in production.

Observers both within and outside of Adams County are looking at the German-owned poultry farm with mixed emotions.

Penn State University's Dr. Anthony Stemberger told an audience in Lancaster recently that Adams Countyans - in fact all Pennsylvanians - should take the German decision as a compliment. He notes that the fact they came shows that they are optimistic about the future of the poultry business in this area. He lusted that local egg producers should share that optimism.

While some observers look at the developments with suspicion and even fear, most do not.

One poultryman who spoke at the recent meeting in Lancaster, at which Stemberger was the main speaker, said that local poultrymen who are good managers have nothing to fear from the new competition. (For more details on that meeting, please see page 98).

The Adams County Farmers Association is considering the foreign-owned farm as a "problem" for now. At a meeting last month, fear was expressed that smaller egg producers in the area would be forced out.

Schwartz speculates that the large German-owned egg farm may hurt smaller producers in the area. On the plus side, he believes that the increased demand for feed will put a good floor under the Adams County corn market. Furthermore, it will increase tax revenues and possibly attract allied industries. That could lead to Adams County becoming a major egg and broiler producing area such as Lancaster County. Growth of

the industry has already been significant. Another advantage Schwartz sees as a result of the German operation is that highly qualified poultrymen will certainly have to be drawn into the area. This high calibre of expertise could be a real plus for all poultrymen in the area, he reasons.

"The change is here, and we've got to learn to live with it," Schwartz reported. "I don't think we can fight it. The challenge will be how to keep the small guy in business. I believe there is still a place for the small producer because the large fellows won't mess with local egg traffic. No matter where they (AMGRAR) would have located in the Northeast, it's bound to affect the egg market.

With egg prices being as low as they are at the present time, a number of producers are wondering why and how AMGRAR expects to show a profit. Some reports say the German poultrymen claim to be able to produce eggs cheaper. While that may well be true due to the firm's large volume buying power and large-scale production, Penn State's Dr. Stemberger may well have hit on just as valid a reason when he addressed poultrymen in Lancaster last month.

"The time to get into the egg business is when it's way down, not when it's booming," he said. "Build more houses when prices are lowest, not when they're highest," he advised. The two poultrymen from West Germany appear to be doing just that in Adams County.

Horse show set

HARRISBURG, Pa. - On August 6, at 10 a.m., the Zembo Mounted Patrol, a unit of the Zembo Temple, will sponsor a horse show at the Quentin Riding Club, Quentin, Lebanon County, Pa.

There will be 21 classes in competition and entry fees range from \$3.00 to \$5.00 per class.

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