

# Gradual growth is foreseen for sheep industry

DENVER, Colo -- A resurgence of the long-declining American sheep industry is near at hand, according to the Executive Director of the American Sheep Producers Council (ASPC), and with it will come dramatic opportunities to provide desperately needed food supplies to developing countries throughout the world.

In recent addresses to 125 newspaper food editors in Los Angeles, and 60 magazine food editors in New York, Richard D. Biglin said the new demands from the Middle East alone have the potential for consuming the total American sheep and lamb crops.

"We're (the world) over four billion population now ... and we'll double that again in 30 more years," Biglin said. "Somehow these

masses of people must be fed and clothed and that's particularly tough in the developing nations ... but, the sheep is a magnificent animal, beautifully equipped to help fill the food and clothing gaps."

The food editors, representing major publications from across the United States, were briefed on current activities of the sheep industry which are aimed at reversing the 35-year decline in numbers.

"Our continuing challenge is to bring our supplies up so we can keep gaining meat case space in comparison with other meats," Biglin stated. "We know the demand is there ... that is the purpose of the Blueprint for Expansion program ... to expand production to meet that demand," he added.

The ASPC executive said that sheep industry growth



Richard D. Biglin

in the West continues to be hampered by predators. The total loss of lambs and sheep to coyotes in 1974 was "very close" to one million head,

according to Biglin. He related that loss to approximately 50 million pounds of lamb in stores and supermarkets and placed the direct cost of losses to producers at \$27 million during that time period.

However, the annual rate of decline in sheep numbers is slowing, and the forecast for the immediate future is for gradual growth.

Recent statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture indicate a six per cent increase in ewe lambs held for breeding flocks in 1978. However, Biglin said, producers will have to withhold from slaughter 20 to 25 per cent of their ewe lambs for the expansion program to be effective.

The immediate problem for most producers is one of economics, according to the ASPC official. "In a good lamb market situation, when

prices are high, there is a great profit incentive to sell lambs when they are market ready," Biglin said. "You must realize that each sheep producer makes his own buying and selling decisions. The industry can only educate and persuade producers to withhold these ewes."

The editors were told that the sheep industry expansion program is working well in the farm flock areas of the country; that new developments in genetics

and breeding are resulting in lamb crops of up to 200 per cent in some areas; and that confinement management of sheep from birth to market may be the wave of the future for the industry.

Referring to lamb meat as the "gourmet feast of antiquity" and the "meat of the future," Biglin assured his audiences on both Coasts that the American sheep industry is on the right track at last and is, without question, in the throes of being "born again".

## Swine meeting to be held

NEWARK, Del. - A swine management meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, December 7, at 8 p.m., at the University of Delaware's Georgetown Substation.

Featured speaker at the meeting will be Dr. David Spruill. Extension swine

specialist at North Carolina State College. He will speak on the subject, "Tips for Greater Pork Profit."

For further information, contact Delaware Extension livestock specialist Dr. Richard Fowler, or call 302-738-2505.

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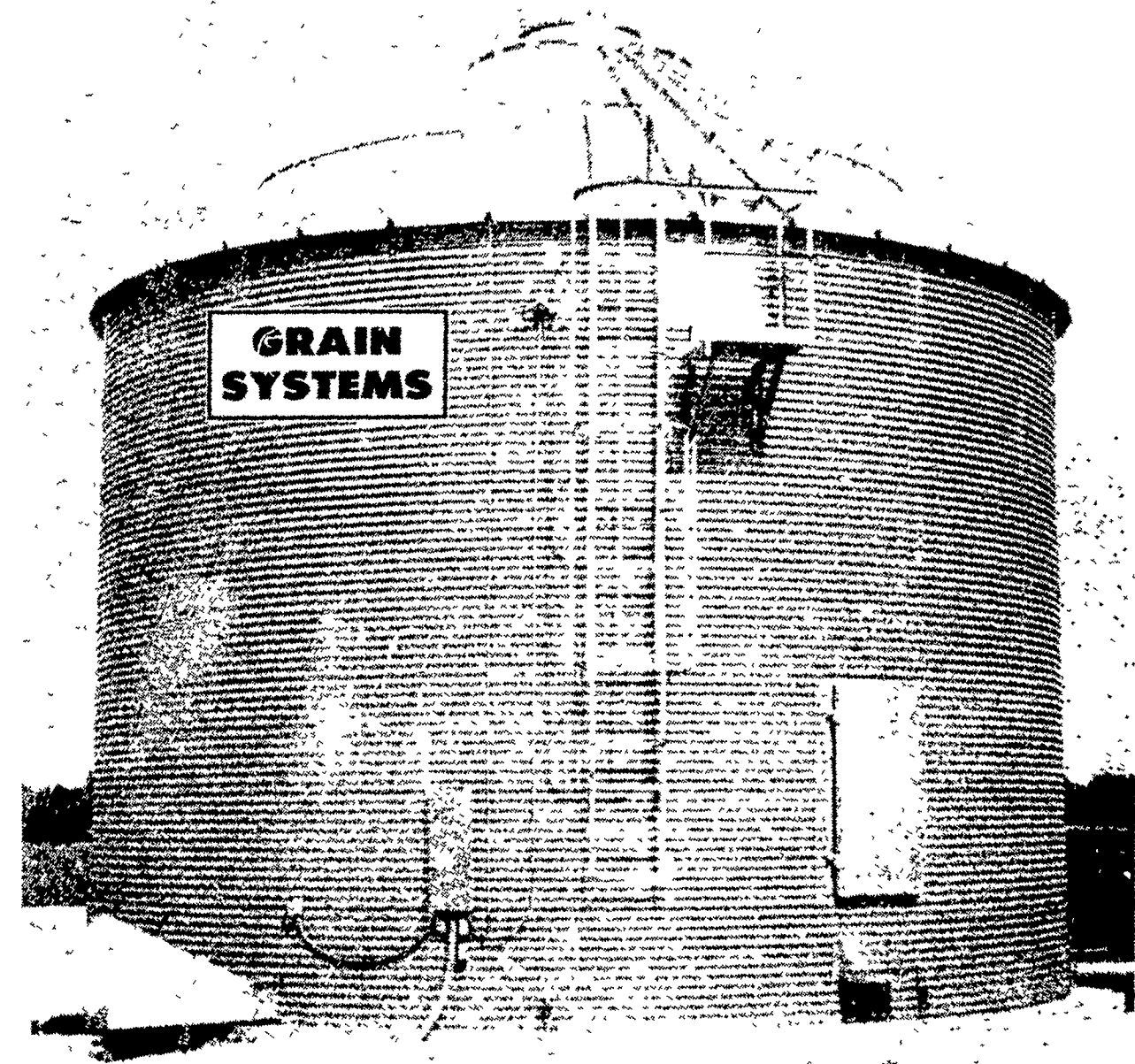
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