

Shelhamer pleased with equipment exposition

By DIETER KRIEG

HARRISBURG — The founder of Pennsylvania's Farm Machinery Exposition, Kent Shelhamer, says that if Pennsylvania doesn't move ahead with such an offering, somebody else will. Furthermore, the former state agriculture secretary proclaims: "You now have a young baby—it's up to you to nourish it and help it along."

While Shelhamer was not at the helm of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture when the Machinery Exposition got underway on March 8, he says he is very pleased to have been a part of it. "I'd do it all over again, only better," the former PDA head said enthusiastically. He has a few suggestions on how to improve the show for next year.

"I suggest early scheduling," Shelhamer began, "to avoid conflicts." He'd also like to see publicity efforts improve, explaining that he was not satisfied with the advance notices and subsequent news coverage given to the Exposition. A special breakfast with commodity queens, the secretary of agriculture, and potential buyers might be a thought, he suggested in a recent interview with Lancaster Farming.

Shelhamer is solidly convinced that the Keystone State should have a machinery exposition. "You can only drift for so long," he warned, "before someone - a promoter - with an eye for the future and ideas for making money comes along." Shelhamer wants Pennsylvania's farmers to have a portion of the pie.

"We should promote agriculture. We haven't done enough promoting of agriculture. We should think about how to make a pretty good show better," he went on with his enthusiasm oozing out as much as ever.

Excited about the potential of the Farm Machinery Exposition, Shelhamer notes that this year's first-ever Expo brought in over \$100,000 to the PDA treasury. According to Farm Show Director Wellington



"If we don't do it, somebody else will," says Kent Shelhamer in regards to the Pennsylvania Farm Equipment Exposition.

Smith, the final, all-inclusive tab will come to \$103,713.16.

Shelhamer, who headed the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture from February 1977 to February 1979, is often regarded to be one of the best agriculture secretaries the state has had in recent memory. A Columbia County fruit grower, Shelhamer explains his promotional-mindedness as a somewhat typical trait of a farmer who has to advertise and sell his own products. He prides himself as being a "shaker and a mover," as well as a stubborn Deutschan.

Shelhamer considers it a great blessing to be able to work hard. The Machinery Exposition stands as the hallmark of his long list of achievements as a member of

the State Legislature, and later head of the Department of Agriculture. To honor him, he was given a special plaque on March 7 at the horsemen's banquet that preceded the Exposition. Penrose Hallowell, present secretary of agriculture, was also recognized for his support of the Exposition activities. Some of the special attractions of the show, such as farm safety exhibits and an emphasis on energy conservation, were Hallowell's ideas.

Farmers' Fun Night on Thursday, the horse pulls on Friday, and the equipment auction on Saturday were Shelhamer's special projects, aside from the Machinery Exposition itself, which stood as the kingpin of the entire 3-day event. "The way for agriculture to become closer and better is by working with it," the agricultural promoter said. "Farmers' Fun Night - it was a time for farmers to pat each other on the back and have fun - we need more of that," he continued in rapid-fire fashion.

"The Machinery Exposition was like having a baby - a first baby - and I know, I

fathered five," he continued. A religious man, he recalls scripture from 1 Corinthians 3:5,6 - "Servants through who you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." He'd like to see the Machinery Exposition receive continued "care and nourishment" now that it has been planted.

"People have faith in a new show," he said confidently and he backs that statement up with some financial reasoning. Exhibitor spaces at the Machinery Exposition and Farm Show were identical in price, taking the respective three and five day schedules into consideration. That's an indication that the Farm Show rates should be raised, says Shelhamer. He adds that of the 13 indoor farm exhibitions in the nation, the Farm Show Complex is the cheapest to get into.

"I'm convinced we have more potential in Pennsylvania because of our location. We should really go out and promote," he emphasized again.

"If I had to do it over again, I would, only better," he concluded.

Berks dairy club meets

FLEETWOOD — The Eastern Berks 4-H Dairy Club held a reorganization meeting at the home of Norman Kurtz on March 16.

The new officers are President Helen Seidel; Vice President Scott Hauseman; Secretary and News reporter Gary Kurtz;

Treasurer Billy Zollers. New Leaders are Bill Zollers; David Hauseman and Norman Kurtz.

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