

Power plant accident has farmers concerned

By DIETER KRIEG
HARRIBURG — Farmers in the area are concerned about the possible consequences of the nuclear accident that occurred on Three Mile Island in late March and has ever since

kept the nation in a state of suspense. Aside from thinking about the safety of their families, they're also wondering what, if any effect it will have on crops this year.

"We've never felt very

good about nuclear power as an alternate source of energy," commented one Lancaster County farmer who feeds 600 steers on a farm south of Maytown. His farm is within the 10-mile radius of the nuclear plant.

"If we could have had a couple of days' notice, I would like to have sold all my livestock, but there is no feasible way many could have done that," said Jim Hershey.

A partner of Hershey's,

Jim Landis, East Petersburg, remarked: "One rumor, that's all you need to cripple the market." He said he evidenced and heard about "sheer panic" in some agricultural marketing circles. "You've got to have

a little bit of faith," he added.

Joe Wivell, another Lancaster Countian, said: "I'd just as well that they shut it (Three Mile Island) down because of the impact that it could ruin our farmland here. I think that there are other means of producing energy." Wivell, a dairyman, had made plans to move his herd to his brother-in-law's farm near Strasburg, had evacuation become necessary.

Wivell's concern for the land and livestock was shared by many, despite reports from officials in Harrisburg that only low levels of radiation were escaping from the nuclear plant on Three Mile Island. Wivell is concerned about long-range effects, and the possibility of a real disaster wasn't out of his mind either.

In York County, Mrs. Karl Strong, wife of a grain farmer, said they had left the area for a couple of days. "It's been a big nervous hassle, we don't know what to do. There are too many conflicting reports," she said. The Strong farm is about six miles south of Three Mile Island.

Ervin Blessing, who lives on a farm on the outskirts of Mount Wolf, simply said he didn't do anything on account of the events just a few miles north of his home. He did leave Sunday and didn't return until Tuesday, however. "What did anybody do — what can you do?" he asked. A grain farmer, he wonders whether or not his soil might have been contaminated. "Nobody knows," he commented dryly.

Ernest Retherford, whose farm in Dauphin County adjoins the atomic plant, was calm about the incident and only left the property for a day. He sells hay, straw, and corn and commented with a smile on his face: "I don't know if we'll have a buyer for it now." He has lived on his 100-acre farm for 26 years.

"I don't feel too badly

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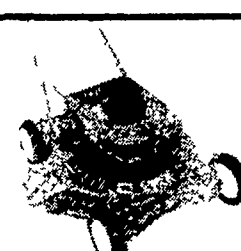
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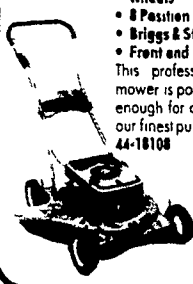
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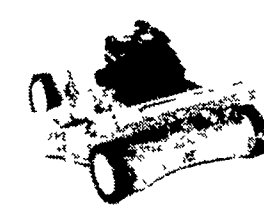
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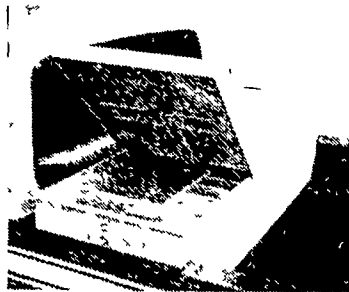
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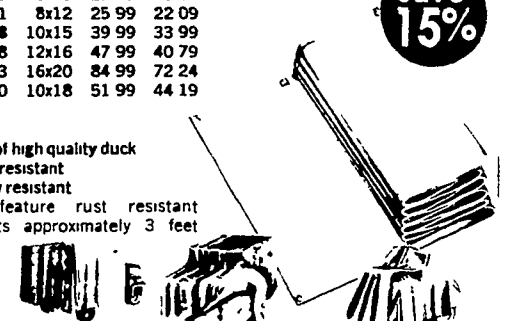
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