

Problem areas are being recognized and solutions looked for

Holstein director foresees promising future

By DIETER KRIEG

LEBANON — Donald Seipt, a national director for the Holstein-Friesian Association of America (HFAA), and one of Pennsylvania's best-known dairy cattle breeders, gave Lebanon County dairymen a lot to think about when he spoke at the Hershey Bare farm earlier this month. He highlighted not only the positive and pleasant side of things, but also the situations which need improving.

The occasion for Seipt's evening speech was the Lebanon County Holstein Field Day which was hosted at the superbly manicured Bare farm - a show place. An estimated 300 people were in attendance, many of them coming from neighboring counties.

Seipt delivered a fast-paced, clear message to the assembled dairymen. "Living with change," he entitled it, and it included everything from embryo transfers and computers to questionable show ring tactics and a look into the next decade. The audience listened attentively at the outdoor evening meeting.

A past president of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association, and now a director of the national club, Seipt is close to Holstein affairs, potentials, and problems. He noted that the Holstein breeders have a good future before them, but that the growth of the industry has also brought about a more pronounced awareness of problems. Among the increased negative findings are that more and more cattle are being purchased on credit and financing sometimes isn't adhered to.

"The transfer of cattle is increasing tremendously, and registrations are up too," the national director commented. "Sales are up, prices are higher." These statistics contribute to the disturbing increase of sellers not getting their money from some buyers, Seipt explained. "It's a small percentage, but a problem, and it is increasing," he added.

That's just one of many changes Seipt talked about.

"Life is a bunch of cycles," the well-known and respected dairyman said early in his presentation. "Dairy farming is full of changes. Today we are embarked on an individual corrective breeding system - a different sire for every cow, compared to one sire 20 years ago when we stressed herd uniformity."

Seipt, who is owner of Keystone Farm and a 160-head registered Holstein herd, predicts that the time will come when computers will make mating selections. The emphasis will continue on corrective breeding geared to specific animals.

Another prediction Seipt makes is that the female will gain in importance in the genetic program. The influence of the sire has always been very important, and will continue to be so, he reasoned, but with embryo transfers and superovulation coming around, the lower side of the pedigree will receive more attention than has been true in the past.

The embryo transfer business is just starting, Seipt explained. He sees tremendous potential in this new technology. Sexing and freezing of embryos will be developed, he assures. This will allow for easy world-wide shipment of genetic material, he explained. "It's a great opportunity to market our cattle. I think we're going to have an exciting time in the '80's. We are living in changing times. Let's benefit from them," he advised.

Backing his optimism with research findings from people who specialize in observing America's farm economy, Seipt says that a prosperous decade is predicted for all of agriculture. The Holstein association, he says, will be a part of the growth. HFAA programs are gaining in popularity, particularly the classification service. In light of the increased interest and participation, the HFAA board of directors is considering making a few changes. Essentially, three or four classifiers may be assigned to specific geographic areas under a supervising classifier and offer their services within just those territories. The Board will examine the proposals more closely this Fall, Seipt revealed.

"This is just another area of change that's coming to the industry," he commented.

The winds of change may sweep a few new rules and procedures into the show circles too. According to the HFAA director, more and more "fixed" cattle are showing up at the big shows where the stakes are high. HFAA leaders want to assure that breeders do not attempt to show their animals in a way which they are not. The trend in dishonest fitting is disturbing, Seipt exclaimed.

He stressed the importance of honesty, integrity, and accuracy in record-keeping.

To combat the increasing occurrence of tampered-with cows entering the show ring, HFAA is considering the use of thermovisual equipment which will detect adulterations to the cow's true form. The goal is to keep such cows and their owners out of the show ring.

Only a "very, very small" number of breeders tamper
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Cabinet officers to speak at 101st PennAg convention

EPHRATA -- A trio of Pennsylvania cabinet officers will present their analyses of the state's problems, and their solutions to those problems, to a gathering of Pennsylvania agribusinessmen next month in Pittsburgh. The occasion will be the

101st annual convention of PennAg Industries Association, a trade group representing some 400 agribusinesses throughout Pennsylvania.

In an hour-long program called Keystone Cabinet Comments, Secretary of Agriculture Penrose

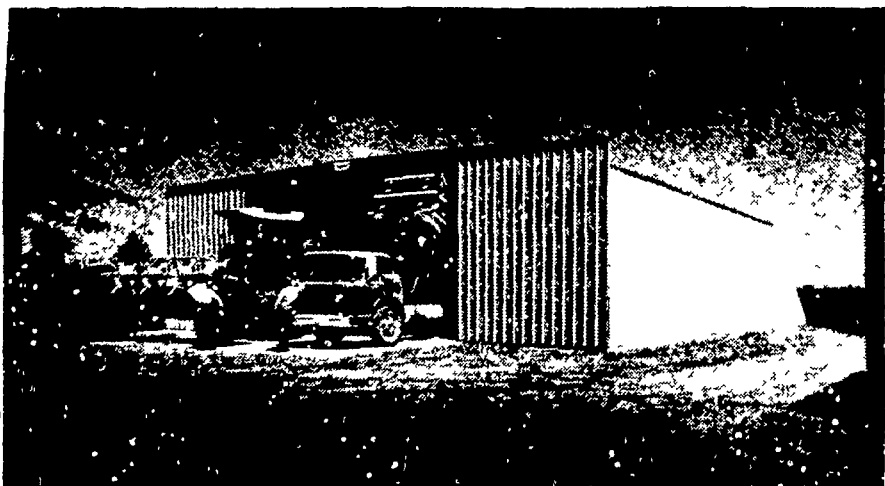
Hallowell, Secretary of Commerce James Bodine and Secretary of Transportation Thomas D. Larson will have a chance to discuss their viewpoints on such topics as disappearing farmland, the outlook for Pennsylvania's economy and the plight of rural roads.

The program is scheduled from 9 to 10 a.m. on Thursday, September 20. The three-day convention begins Tuesday, September 18 and ends Thursday.

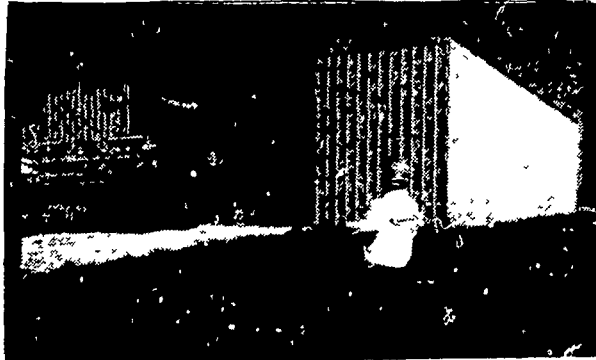


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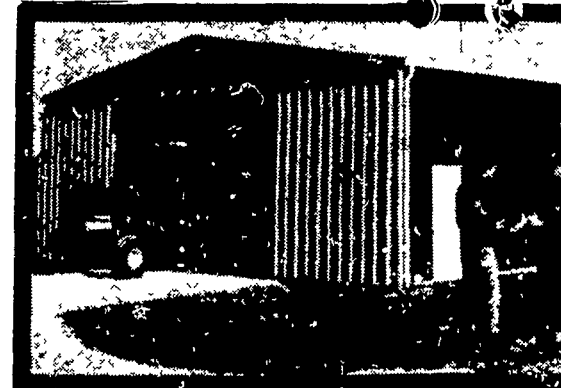
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