

## Embargo, fertilizer costs like old one - two punch

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — A recent embargo on U.S. grain shipments to Russia presents only the first jolt in a cost-price squeeze being clamped on this nation's grain farmers.

The other half of an economic one-two punch is upward-spiraling fertilizer prices, reports V. Allan Bandel, Extension fertilizer specialist and professor of agronomy at the University of Maryland in College Park. Bandel bases his gloomy outlook on a talk given recently by Edwin M. Wheeler to 975 farmers and

agribusinessmen attending the sixth annual Mid-Atlantic No-Till Conference at the Hunt Valley Inn north of Baltimore. Wheeler is president of the Fertilizer Institute, headquartered in Washington, D.C.

"You will be shocked by fertilizer prices this spring," Wheeler told his audience. And he predicted that by 1985, when natural gas prices have been fully decontrolled by the federal government, anhydrous ammonia will be selling for at least \$200 per ton, f.o.b. the processing plant.

(Current price is about \$135 per ton f.o.b.).

Record exports of fertilizer to friendly countries are also exerting upward pressures on the domestic market, Wheeler said.

Here are ways to combat the problem:

Reduce fuel consumption wherever possible. If U.S. farmers start planting all at once this spring, there won't be enough fuel to go around. We need legislators in Washington, D.C., who will assure U.S. agriculture of adequate sources of energy. But energy will not be cheap.

No-till farming will grow like "gang-busters" in the next decade. It takes much less petroleum to produce the extra herbicides needed for no-till than for the tractor fuel needed for extra trips across a field with conventional tillage farming.

Canadian fertilizer suppliers are sold out through June 30. So supplies will be tight in the U.S. We must now consider more no-till acreage and less fertilizer.

Even before the recent embargo on exports to Russia, grain prices in the U.S. were not high enough to

offset foreseeable increases in costs of fertilizer and other farm production requirements.

The Tennessee Valley Authority is scheduled to put into operation this fall the nation's first plant to make anhydrous ammonia from coal.

The fertilizer industry spokesman declared that "irrigated agriculture in the West is in trouble. The overhead pivot system of

irrigation appears destined to be outlawed in the West and Southwest because it is energy-inefficient.

"For this reason we must stop drunken urban sprawl in the East. We need land for agriculture."

Wheeler pointed out that "American farmers are the only segment of the U.S. economy which has shown increased production efficiency in the last decade."

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## N.J. dairymen to meet January 24

FLEMINGTON, N.J. — Dairy Interests Day, an annual activity of New Jersey Farmers' Week, this year is scheduled to be held in Hunterdon County on Thursday, January 24. The place is Pfenninger's Hilltop Inn. Meeting begins at 11:30 a.m.

Traditionally, Farmers' Week activities were held in Trenton, but as facilities adequate to handle the many events became scarce, locations were sought outside the State Capitol. This year many of the activities, including the annual State Agricultural Convention, will be held in the Cherry Hill-Mt. Laurel area.

Featured on the Dairy Day program will be two young dairymen from neighboring counties, Warren and Somerset. They are Kenneth VanNuys, Hillsboro Farm, Belle Mead; and Robert Connolly, Oxford.

They will appear on a panel in the afternoon session on "Programmed Herd Health."

Both will describe their farming operations in their introductions. They will then discuss their herd health programs, the practices and procedures that they use to reduce the incidence of disease, respond to health problems, maintain satisfactory breeding efficiency in the herd.

Connolly has a top producing herd of 65

Holsteins, ranking consistently high on the State DHIA herd performance list. Last year his herd averaged 17,976 pounds of milk, with 659 pounds butterfat.

VanNuys is associated with his father in the operation of Hillsboro Farm, a long-time Holstein breeding establishment.

Interestingly, Hillsboro Farm, then owned by Ken's grandfather, Peter, was the first home for sires in the first artificial breeding cooperative founded in the country back in 1938.

The VanNuys herd has recently been moved into a new modern 100 plus cow facility. Ken has responsibility for breeding and health care in the operation.

Both work very closely with their veterinarian, and in the discussion on the dairy day program, will indicate the importance of developing a strong relationship with the veterinarian in carrying out an effective herd health program.

Also on Dairy Day program will be Patrick B. Healy, Secretary of the National Milk Producers Federation. He will discuss, "The Dairy Farmer and National Affairs." Dr. Sidney Nusbaum, Assistant Director of the New Jersey Division of Animal Health, will provide an up-date of the diagnostic laboratory.

Meeting hosts will be

Woodson W. Moffett, Jr., Director of the Division of Dairy Industry, and Edward Oleskie, Extension Specialist in Dairy Science, Cook College.

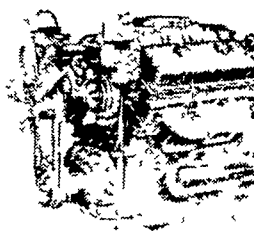
Tickets for the luncheon are available at \$6 each, by writing the Dairymen's Council, c/o Division of Dairy Industry, PO Box 1999, Trenton, NJ 08625.

Another activity of Farmers' Week is the annual

luncheon of the Garden State Dairy Goat Association. This year it will be held at Ryland Oleskie, Whitehouse, beginning with a luncheon at 1 p.m.

Mrs. Gail K. LeCompte, Marketing Chairman for the Goat Association, reports that the featured speaker will be Dr. Mary E. Smith, Cornell University. For details on the dairy goat program, call LeCompte at 201-236-2369.

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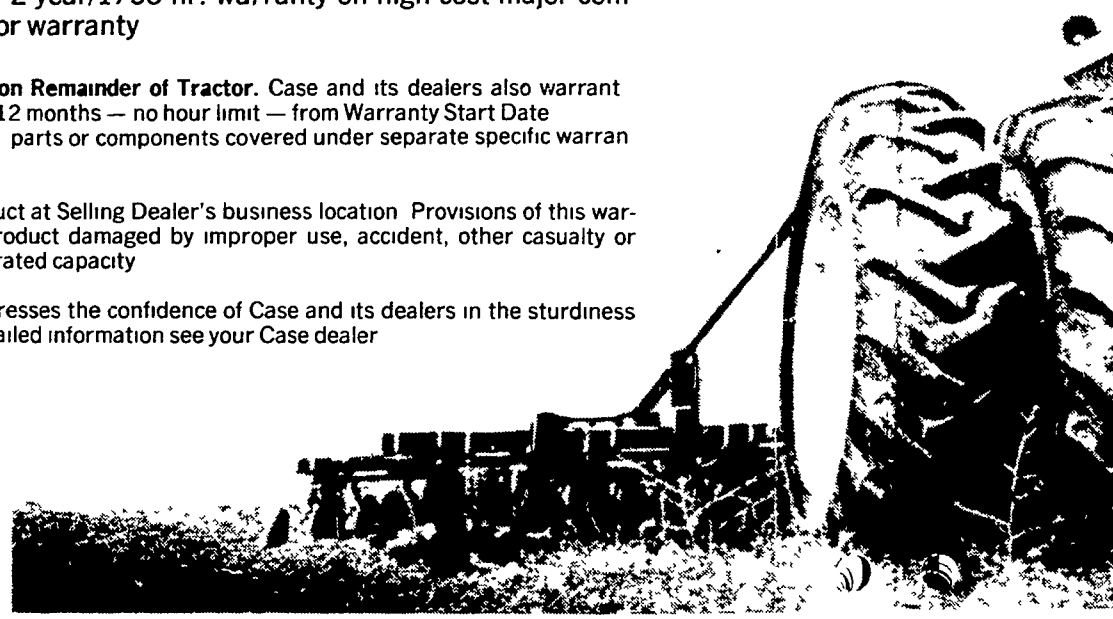
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