

## Commercial producers speak out on boars

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Staff Correspondent

LANCASTER, Pa. — In the hopes of picking up sound management advice and ideas for their own operations, pork producers from Pennsylvania and surrounding areas gathered at the Host Farm, Lancaster last week for the second annual Keystone Pork Congress.

One of the many topics discussed during the two day affair was: What do the commercial producers need from the boar producers that they are not getting now? Fielding this question were two commercial hog producers: Bill Sammons, operating a 440 sow family corporation in Delaware; Ronald Harrison, who runs a 500 sow operation in Pennsylvania; and Gere Isler, Ohio State University Extension animal specialist.

Sammons advised producers to stay away from extremes. "There is more to a pig than the way it cuts," he stated. "We need to keep the total hog as a concept." Harrison agreed, saying he didn't like hogs that looked like they needed six legs.

Sammons succeeded in making it clear he was interested in the 'total package' and not just one trait. Sammons said he wants a hog with all the qualities and is breeding for consistent sows.

"We probably average 6 or 7 litters per sow," he explained and have some sows that have farrowed as many as 13 or 14 litters."

All three panelists agreed that productivity and feed efficiency play a very important part in hog production. Isler stated the producer who is concerned with these traits will be the survivor.

A purebred breeder's goal should be one of selling boars that will make money for the commercial producer, Isler commented.

The boars should be tough, according to Isler. "Producers don't have time for problem pigs," he continued. "Health is the easiest trait to select for."

Speaking on the same lines as Isler, Harrison commented that he is after a boar that not only is sound but one that will stay sound.

"A boar should have the ability to be aggressive and

stay sound," this producer remarked. We can always find groups of sound boars, but which ones will stay sound?"

"Seed stock producers should be concerned with the quality of pork," Harrison remarked. Boars play a big part in this aspect.

Harrison told the large audience that he feels pork is better than it used to be. "I take pride when a neighbor tells me this," he said.

Natural thickness and depth of body are important items in judging a hog according to this producer.

Another area in which Harrison is concerned in boar selection is the underline. "The structure and design plays an important part in controlling mastitis problems," he said.

Discussing soundness in boars, Isler explained that tests on unsound boars showed that about half of the problems were the result of scapula (shoulder blade) fractures. Sammons felt that there is not enough 'spring' in the front legs. They are made too straight and don't have enough flex in their joints.

All of the panelists said

they felt that the pig is flexible enough for change. "It's easier to change the design of a hog to fit your buildings, then change the buildings to fit the hog," Harrison stated.

Isler commented that hogs can be shaped just about any way a producer would want them. There is a big difference in producers, he said, and they are going in different directions.

Be an individual, but stay in tune to the needs of the commercial hog producers, they urged the purebred breeders.

The panelists advised their listeners to know the producers they are buying boars from. Learn their philosophies and what they are looking for, they commented.



## Bucks County NFO to hold annual meeting in March

PLUMSTEADVILLE — Oras Kanerva will be the featured speaker at the annual dinner of the Bucks County unit of the National Farmers Organization.

The meeting will be held Saturday, March 15, at 7 p.m., at the Plumsteadville Fire Hall.

The Fire Hall is located along Route 611 in Plumsteadville.

Tickets to the event are \$6. For reservations, the public is invited to contact Bill Garges, 215/348-5514; Alvin T. Detweiler, 215/766-8934; or Web Singer, 215/346-7749 before March 3.

Kanerva owned and operated a dairy farm in Zum, Minnesota from 1950 until 1966. During this time, he served on several co-op boards as Director. He served as leader in several Milk Bargaining



Oras Kanerva

Organizations. He joined NFO in April, 1961.

He served as a county officer in 1961 and 1962. He served on the National NFO Board of Directors five years, from 1963 until 1967 and worked with the NFO Dairy department for six years.

## Dairy goat lovers

DORNSIFE — Twenty one members and friends of Heart of Penn Dairy Goat Breeders' Co-op met near Dornsife on February 3. After the business meeting, the guest speaker, Terry McAfee, Northumberland County's DHIA Supervisor, gave a presentation on the mechanics and purposes of the Dairy Herd Improvement program. After some questions and answers on the program, those in attendance enjoyed a covered dish meal in celebration of Valentine's Day.

A nominating committee consisting of Don Molaro of Dornsife, Linda Miller of Helfenstein and Dolly Peifer of Pillow was appointed. June 15 was tentatively set as the date for the group's Fun Show to be held at Someday Hill. Dolly Peifer was appointed to prepare for the event, held as part of June's Dairy Month activities. Since some find Sunday a difficult day to attend meetings, club decided to meet the first Saturday of the month. By-laws have been drawn up and will be voted upon at the March meeting. Roberta Molaro, Dornsife, will edit the newsletter. Possible milk markets are being explored and a report will be made at the March meeting.

The next meeting will be held on March 1 at 8:00 P.M. Elections of officers will be held. The evening's program will be a round-table discussion of the kidding season.

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