

Stan Amick, manager of Penn State's Milk Testing Laboratory, watches Lucy Tressler record somatic cell counts on a "barn sheet". The sheet, bound for a Pennsylvania dairyman, reflects butterfat and protein content of milk, as well as the possibility of mastitis.

## Somatic cell count

(Continued from Page D27)

trols; when their milk was tested for fat content at Penn State, cell counts were also monitored, but herd managers received no cell count data and weren't aware that their cows were under study.

Eberhart and his colleagues found that cell counts for both groups, similar at the project's outset, began to diverge after six months. From then on, somatic cell numbers were substantially lower in pilot project herds than in controls, indicating that the informed dairymen reacted to SCC data by tightening mastitis control.

The research also examined reliability of cell counts as infection indicators.

Working with 28 Centre

and Clinton county dairy herds - Stringer's was one - the researchers used logistic analysis to correlate presence of infection with somatic cell counts. As cell counts increased, so did the likelihood of major infection. Uninfected cows tended to have low somatic counts.

Within each cell count range, the probability of infection was higher in older than in younger animals.

Joe Stringer and many other dairymen say they feel their business is in better shape today because their cows are producing well, and milk is bring a premium price.

A healthy profit stems from a healthy herd, an end to which somatic cell counting contributes.

## Food prices continue to moderate rise in cost of living

WASHINGTON, D.C. — After adjusting for seasonal variations, the January Consumer Price Index showed food prices unchanged from December. Thus, the 0.9 percent increase for food in the unadjusted CPI was a normal seasonal change, considerably less than the 1.5 percent increase in prices for non-food items.

According to USDA economists, food prices have risen less than half as fast as non-food prices during the last six months, thus helping to moderate the general rate of inflation.

Summarizing the Agricultural Outlook, economists of the Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service note that while food prices will continue upward during 1980, they will rise at a significantly slower pace than prices for non-food items. The general economy is expected to continue sluggish in 1980, with a mild recession still in the outlook.

However, aggregate demand for food will probably be near last year's level. Consequently, prices for agricultural products will depend mainly on domestic supply and foreign demand factors.

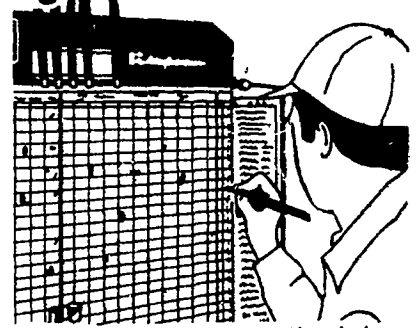
Smaller supplies and higher prices are in prospect for beef and veal; however, larger supplies of pork and poultry will moderate price increases for these meats and for beef and veal as well—particularly in the first half of the year. Current supplies of fresh fruit, processed fruits and vegetables, and fats and oils suggest that prices for these products will rise much more slowly than the general inflation rate.

In 1979, net farm income totaled about \$33 billion, up from \$28 billion the year before. This year, cash receipts are forecast to rise a modest 5 percent, while production expenses surge ahead at near last year's rate. This combination will cause net farm income to decline in 1980, probably averaging in the mid-20's.

Agricultural exports will be record large this year, with volume possibly exceeding last year's level by 10 percent and value up to 16 percent. Wheat, feed grains, soybeans, rice, and cotton are all moving into export markets in larger amounts this year than last. Export sales to the developing countries are expected to increase the most.

Copies of "Agricultural Outlook" magazine (AO-52), approved by the World Food and Agricultural Outlook and Situation Board, will be available next week. For further information, contact Larry Van Meir at (202) 447-2317.

## New scientific dairy record system!



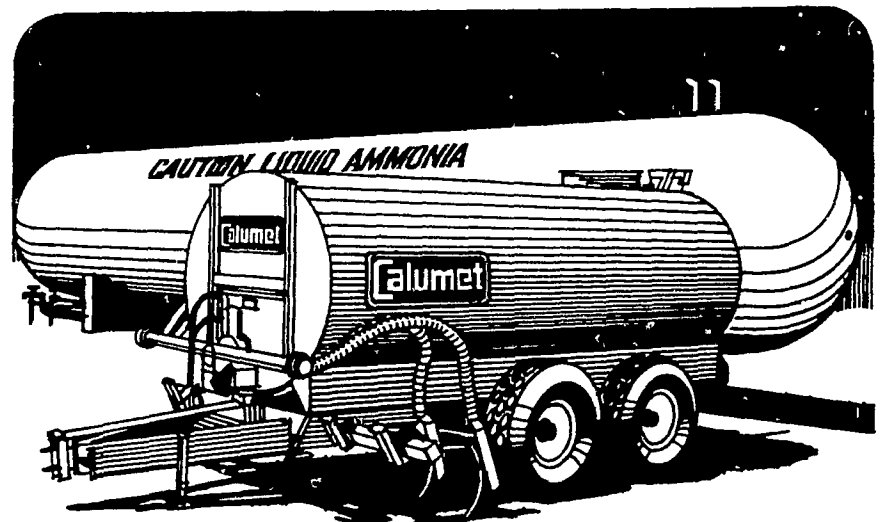
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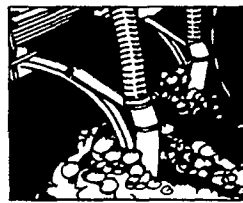
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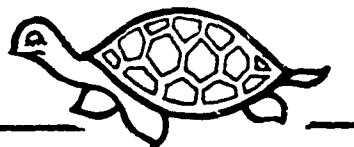


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