

# Senate Committee approves reopening reserve

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Thursday approved legislation to open on a limited basis the farmer-held grain reserve to producers of 1979 corn and wheat who did not participate in last year's "set aside."

As an incentive to gasoline production, the Committee also approved a provision to authorize the sale of corn owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation for conversion into alcohol fuel at not less than the grain reserve release price, currently \$2.63 per bushel. The Committee action

came at the conclusion of hearings on a number of bills aimed at easing the impact of the Russian grain embargo on American farmers. The Department of Agriculture endorsed both provisions of the bill.

The bill is a modification of two provisions in an eight-point legislative program proposed by Sen. Herman E. Talmadge (D-Ga.), chairman of the Committee, to give the Carter Administration increased authority to assist farmers adversely affected by the embargo.

Talmadge said Thursday's action does not preclude consideration by the Committee of further legislative

proposals dealing with the embargo.

The bill would give the secretary of agriculture discretionary authority to open the grain reserve program for a limited quantity of 1979 wheat and corn produced by farmers who did set aside — leave idle — cropland last year.

Howard W. Hjort, the Department of Agriculture's chief economist, estimated that a maximum of 5 to 10 million tons of additional corn would be taken into the reserve program under the bill.

The Administration did not request the opening of the program for wheat, but did not oppose an amendment

sponsored by Sen. David L. Boren (D-Okla.) to place that commodity on the same footing as corn.

Under the farmer-held reserve program, participating producers receive a loan (currently \$2.10 per bushel for corn and \$2.50 for wheat) when the grain goes into storage and are paid storage fees. Grain is released back to producers from the reserve when market prices reach certain pre-set levels and the producer repays the loan.

Under existing law, farmers who do not idle acres when a set-aside is in effect are ineligible to participate in the reserve or to receive price support loans.

The bill as approved by the Committee Thursday would not extend price support loans to non-complying 1979 producers other than through the grain reserve.

## Adams Forum views energy sources

LITTLESTOWN — "Energy Sources for the 80's", a discussion of alternative energy sources, was the theme for the second annual Adams County Farm Forum, on March 4. Topics included the harnessing of solar energy and the on-farm production of ethanol and methane gas.

Robert LaTurner of Galsburg, Ill., president of ACI Builders, used color slides to illustrate passive solar-heated buildings. While most of the buildings are designed as hog houses, farm shops or grain drying facilities, he did present several conventionally-appearing homes.

"Because southern Pennsylvania is at about the same longitude as Illinois, you should realize 800 B.T.U. per square foot per day more than justifies the installation of a solar energy system," said LaTurner.

LaTurner encouraged farmers to develop long range farmstead improvement plans then work to reach these goals. He pointed to the benefits of solar application to grain drying and predicted that flat floor storage will be the trend of the future in handling grain. He told how swine producers could save 70 to 90 percent on their heating bill for nursery barns with a solar collector and a distribution system which assured warm air for the baby pigs.

"Farmers, long recognized as the supplier of food and fiber, will plan an increasingly important role in fuel production as energy costs rise," said John Martin, design engineer for the firm of Sheaffer and Roland, Chicago, Ill., who spoke on alcohol production on the farm and methane as an energy source.

"Farmers who are in a position to feed the brewer's grain by-product as it is produced will enjoy a distinct advantage," said Martin.

He pointed out that present fuel oil prices did not provide a sufficient profit margin for farmers to produce ethanol for fuel.

The program concluded with a tour to Mason-Dixon Farms to see a methane generator in operation.

## Broiler placements continue climb

HARRISBURG — Placements of broiler chicks in the commonwealth during the week ending February 23 totaled 2,303,000, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service. The placements were six percent above the corresponding week a year ago.

Placements in Pennsylvania were also eight percent above the previous week. Average placements during the past nine weeks were three percent above a year earlier.

In the 21 key poultry producing states, placements of broiler chicks

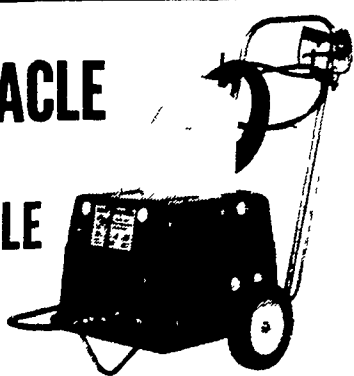
during the week were 81,172,000, three percent above the previous week and nine percent above the same week in 1979. Average placements in the 21 states during the past nine weeks were six percent above a year ago.

Broiler fryers slaughtered in Pennsylvania under federal inspection during the week ending February 13, totaled 1,733,000, with an average liveweight of 4.07 pounds.

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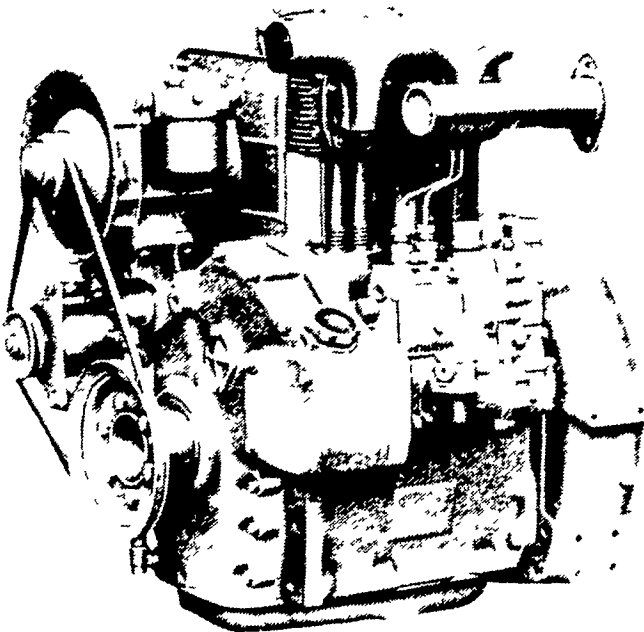
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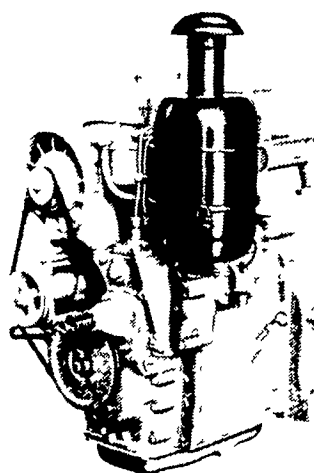
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