



Brief answers
to short questions
**Sheila's
Shorts**
By Sheila Miller

This week's column will be short and sweet.

Did you every try to type with all of your fingers wearing bandages? Well, after handling over 1000 bales of hay, my typing-key-pushers are covered with battle scars and blisters

So, without further explanation — because anyone who has experienced binder-twine blues knows the feeling — let's answer some readers' questions.

Where's the hare auction?
Paul Turner, owner of the Red Barn Rabbit Farm, R2 Airville writes:

Would you please send me some information? I am very anxious to visit Folger's Auction, but I haven't been able to find the address or phone number. I have rabbits that I would like to take up there.

I had some difficulty in answering your question, Mr. Turner, because I had to make an assumption.

You asked for Folger's Auction, which I am not familiar with. But Lancaster Farming does carry the reports from Foglesville Live Poultry Auction, which lists rabbit sales.

So, my assumption is that this is the auction you want.

Although I don't have the exact location of the auction, I did manage to get their telephone number. It's 215/395-6611.

The town of Foglesville is located in Lehigh County, along Route 100. It is just north of Interstate 78-Route 22, about 5 miles west of Allentown and 10 miles east of Hamburg.

Since there is no direct route from York County to

Allentown, I'll let you decide what the best trip will be for you

What's parity?

Roland G Kamoda R1 Monongahela, writes and asks

What is parity?

Now, that's a good question. Farmers everywhere have heard and read the word, probably several thousand times. But, what does it really mean?

Unfortunately, my education in agriculture economics was one of my weak spots — basically because I always found columns of numbers much less interesting than livestock and crops.

But, knowing farm business and ag economics, I suppose, becomes a necessary evil for all farmers.

For a very simple explanation on the term, I decided to go to my stand-by reference, the encyclopedia.

According to World Book, parity "measures the equality of purchasing power of two different currencies, or of the price of goods during two different periods."

They explain that here in the U.S. parity applies to farm products. "The parity price for a particular farm product is that price which gives a farmer the same

purchasing power that was had during a specified period of time called the base period"

The most common base period, they say, is the period from 1910-1914.

To make sure the farmer got 'a fair share', the federal government passed the Agricultural Adjustment Act in 1933. This act introduced parity to measure agricultural equality, and developed a system of price supports to insure it, they explain.

"The law provided for an index of prices for things farmers sell, and one for things they buy. The index number of prices received for any particular year is found by comparing the sum of the prices of crops during that year with the sum of the prices of crops during the base period. The index number of prices paid is found the same way. If the index number of prices received equals the index number of prices paid, prices are 'at parity' "

Then in 1940, Congress made some changes in how parity is computed. The change required the Secretary of Agriculture to use a 10-year moving average if it gave a higher support price than what the 1910-1914 average gave

According to Ruth Tallman, county executive

director for the USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service in Dauphin County, parity comes into play primarily in dairy price support programs.

She said the target period between 1910 and 1914 is used; but, she noted, the price index used is that of an average good year — not an exceptional year.

Tallman said that parity can be best understood by remembering that the price paid to a farmer should be equivalent to 1910-14 prices. "In other words, if a bushel of wheat bought a pair of new shoes in 1910, it should in 1980."

But, she closed by noting, today's milk support prices are only between 75 percent and 90 percent parity.

Shepherds learn sheep management skills

LEESPORT — Fifteen people received certificates of accomplishment for successful participation in a sheep clinic held at the Leesport Market & Auction.

The sheep clinic, sponsored by the Extension Service and Penn State, was conducted as part of a statewide effort to expand sheep production in Pennsylvania. Basic sheep management skills were taught by Clyde A.B. Myers, County Agent

Catching sheep, making "instant" sheep halters, determining the age of sheep, determining the rectal temperature, giving intramuscular injections, and deworming sheep with dose syringe, were taught to enable shepherds to be competent in performing

approved sheep management practices.

Myers explained and demonstrated each skill. A laboratory session followed which allowed each participant to practice the 'new' skills.

To qualify to receive the certificate of accomplishment, individuals had to score 85 or higher. Those receiving the certificate of accomplishment were: Ken Cook, R1 Mohnton; Paul, Pauline, Paula and Frank Jr. Nave, R1 Hamburg; Chris Reed, R1 Hamburg; Dennis & Sandy McLaughlin, R1 Bernville; John & Barb Bernard, R1 Bechtelsville; Robin & Bill Koch, R5 Sinking Spring; Jay & Bill Weist, R1 Leesport; and Fred Bube, R1 Robesonia.

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