Nat'l Cattlemen's president optimistic about future



Merlyn Carlson, president of the National Cattlemen's Association, checks range conditions on his Nebraska ranch.

LODGEPOLE, Neb. -What is the nation's largest industry?

and, after a brief stop-over

in Iowa, homesteaded the

Carlson and his family still

In addition to the ranch,

Merlyn and his father run a

commercial feedlot at

A taciturn man with a dry sense of humor, Carlson

remembers with fondness

nearby Chappel, Nebraska

which

Nebraska ranch

operate today

If you asked the man on the street, he'd probably say it's the automobile industry. But he'd be wrong. It's agriculture.

The assets of agriculture total more than \$950 billion a sum equal to about three-fifths of the capital assets of all corporations in the United States.

Not only is agriculture the single largest part of our economy, it also exerts a tremendous influence on all other parts. For every job on the farm or ranch, there are three more in related supply and processing businesses. As a matter of fact, one out of every five jobs in private enterprise is related to agriculture and agribusiness.

A man who knows his agriculture is Merlyn Carlson, a third generation cattleman from Lodgepole, Nebraska. He's president of the National Cattlemen's Association, representating 300,000 professional cattlemen across the United States. The cattle industry, incidentally, is the largest part of agriculture

Carlson comes from hearty stock His grandfather came to America from Sweden in the 1880's

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his boyhood days on the ranch. He had to carry his own weight then — as he expects his own three children to carry theirs today.

"Ranch kids have always worked right along side of the hired hands," he says, "and they still do today — at least mine do.'

While attending college at Colorado State University, Carlson proved he was no dime store cowboy. He developed something of a reputation for his calf roping abilities - and even used some of his first winnings to buy the wedding ring he gave to his wife, Janice.

Carlson's not a boastful man. But he's quietly proud of the fact that his fellow

cattlemen elected him to head up the strongest and most respected national organization of cattlemen in the country.

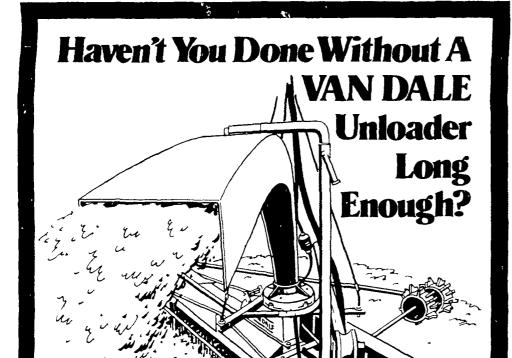
In recent months cattlemen have been going through some hard times. They may be harder hit by inflation and tight money than just about any other group in our society. But 18 Carlson pessimistic?

Not to hear him talk, he ısn't

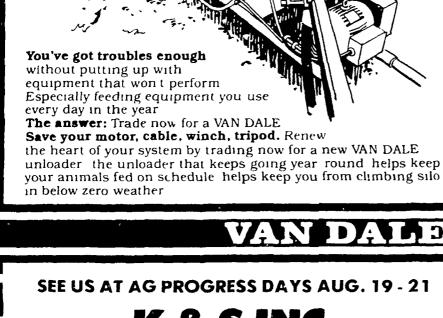
"Americans love their beef," he says. "They always have, and they always will. Right now cattlemen are going through some tough times. But we'll pull out of it and keep

(Turn to Page A29)









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