

State farm product sales reach \$2.2 billion

LANCASTER — Sale of farm products in Pennsylvania amounted to \$2.2 billion in 1978, according to the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

The total is based on the preliminary results of the 1978 Census of Agriculture, which counted 59,973 farms in the State, with average per farm sales of \$36,566; an average size of 146 acres; and average value of land and buildings \$187,347.

Comparisons with totals from the previous census (1974) should be made with caution because of significant improvements in data collection procedures for 1978. Bureau officials believe that the improvement in data collection had a much greater effect on the count of farms than on measures of agricultural production. The improvements are discussed further below.

While Pennsylvania farm product sales climbed 46 percent from \$1.5 billion in 1974, farmers' expenses also grew, with feed purchased for livestock and poultry up from \$340.7 to \$433.5 million in 1978; hired farm labor from \$112.8 to \$177.8 million; and gasoline and other petroleum products from \$58.1 to \$90.4 million.

The total energy cost for Pennsylvania farms amounted to \$129 million. The market value of all machinery and equipment went up 59 percent from \$1.1 to \$1.8 billion four years later.

Livestock and their products brought a return of \$1.2 billion, 55 percent of Pennsylvania's total farm sales, compared with \$828.8 million in 1974.

Dairy product sales from 16,026 farms brought \$762.7 million. The inventory of 662,800 milk cows was down from 670,600 in 1974.

Pennsylvania's total cattle and calves inventory 1,736,400 also was down from

1,732,500 in 1974, but the 943,900 sold from 37,500 farms in 1978 was ahead of the 824,700 sold in 1974. Twenty-nine percent were fattened on grain and concentrates. The inventory included 179,900 beef cows, compared with 192,300 in 1974.

A total inventory of 811,900 hogs, 95,600 for breeding purposes, was counted on 12,741 Pennsylvania farms, with 1.3 million reported sold, of which 338,100 were feeder pigs. Approximately two percent or 308 farms reported 500 or more hogs and pigs, accounting for 33 percent of the State's total inventory.

Inventory of sheep and lambs on 3,176 farms was reported at 102,100 head, with 80,700 shorn, yielding 557,200 pounds of wool, and 62,800 head sold.

The horses and ponies inventory increased from 45,700 to 62,000.

Sales of poultry and their products amounted to \$335.8 million, compared with \$220 million in 1974. Broilers sold increased from 56.5 to 87.3 million birds in 1978, and chickens three months or older went up from 14.3 to 18 million. Hens and pullets of laying age gained from 12.4 to 15.7 million. Turkeys sold from 398 farms were reported at 4 million birds.

Crops brought a return of \$648.5 million, compared with \$448.2 million in 1974. Hay, the leading crop in acreage, was cut from 2 million acres, yielding 4.5 million tons, compared with 1.6 million acres and 3.6 million tons in 1974.

Corn placed second on an acreage basis, 1.2 million acres producing 115.5 million bushels. Corn for silage or green chop was the third ranking crop with 429,100 acres yielding 6.6 million tons.

Other field crops were oats, 310,700 acres; wheat, 195,600 acres; barley, 86,200 acres; and soybean, 77,100

acres.

Other measures of Pennsylvania farms also portrayed gains as the average value of land and buildings per acre climbed from \$734 to \$1273; and total cropland went up from 5.3 to 5.8 million acres in 1978.

Additional facets of Pennsylvania farm as depicted in the 1978 Census of Agriculture include the following:

Ninety percent or 54,033 of the 59,973 farms were operated by individuals or families, 4,752 by partnerships, and 981 by corporations, of which 864 were family held.

Ninety-one percent of the operators owned all or part of the farms they operated, with 38,324 fully owned, 16,473 partly owned, and 5,176 operated by tenants.

Farming was the principal occupation of 31,498 or 53 percent of the operators, while 28,475 spent most of their work time at a nonfarm occupation.

Eighty-nine percent of the operators who reported place of residence lived on the farm they operated.

Some 2,881 farms, five percent, were operated by women, as revealed by a question on sex of operator asked for the first time.

Pennsylvania farmers were younger on the average than in 1974, 49.8 years compared with 50.6.

Farm product sales of \$40,000 or more; 21,151 had sales above \$20,000; and 38,822 had sales of less than \$20,000.

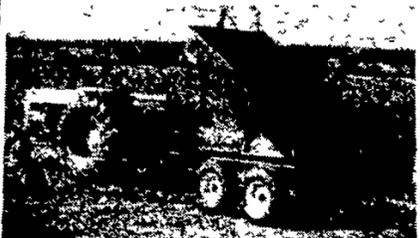
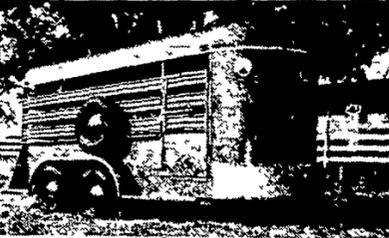
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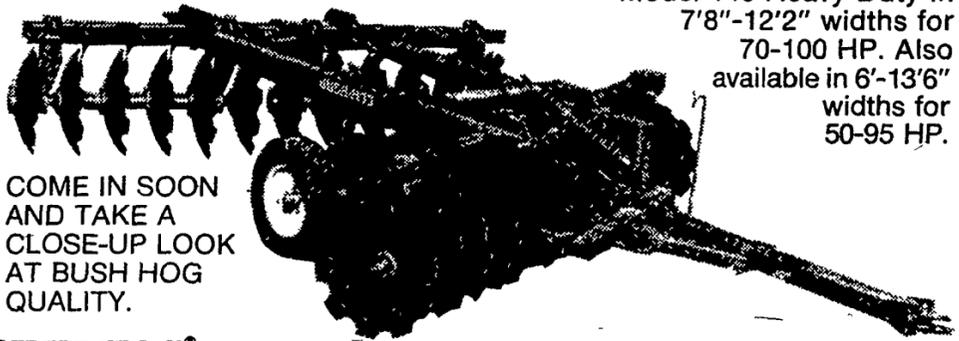
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