

Lancaster-Chester Grangers meet on mushrooms

OAKRYN — Legislators, Congressmen, and mushroom growers met with the Pennsylvania State Grange at Fulton Grange Hall in Lancaster County, to discuss problems facing the Pennsylvania mushroom industry.

The agenda of the meeting held three purposes, including generating Grange policy, information gathering, and providing an update of Grange activities on the mushroom industry's problems.

Bob Frederick, Legislative Director of the National Grange, reported to the growers that his organization, in conjunction with the Farmers Union and the Food Processors

Association, as well as the American Mushroom Institute, were working together on the import issue in Washington, D.C.

Imports from the People's Republic of China and Taiwan are depressing the domestic canning and fresh mushroom markets. "The Taiwanese are shipping their quota to us," Frederick noted, "and then shipping their surplus to Hong Kong where it is processed and shipped to the United States."

Rocco Pugliese, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Food Processors Association, stated the import problem from the People's Republic of China

"will worsen over the next three to five years."

"The problem is rooted in survival," he said. "The processor is to the point where he can no longer afford to can only domestic mushrooms."

Current production costs in America are about 65 cents a pound. In the Far East, production costs are about 22 cents per pound. Foreign growers can also use the more effective pesticides because "they don't have the equivalent of an Environmental Protection Agency."

Charles Wismer, Master of the Pennsylvania State Grange, noted that foreign mushroom producers got their start mushroom production with U.S. dollars.

Margaret Edwards, a Lancaster County Grange member, verified that fact saying she "served one of them dinner back in the 50's."

"They weren't interested in dairy cows," she said. "But, when they got close to the mushroom houses they started measuring and asking lots of questions."

"I asked the man where he was going to sell his mushrooms when he started growing, and whether or not he would take our market away from us. He said, 'France'. So I asked him why France wasn't paying his way over here, and he changed the subject."

Another problem discussed at the Grange meeting was pesticide approval. Mushroom growers are having increasing dif-

ficulty getting state pesticide labels approved by the Environmental Protection Agency."

"The Extension Service told us one of the more effective pesticides against flies, which is one of our big problems, would probably get registered last August," a Chester County grower noted. "It's a year later, and it's still not approved."

The flies produce a worm that attacks the mycelium of the mushroom. Those mushrooms showing fly damage have a black streak running up the center of the stem. Some beds don't even come up at all."

Another Chester County grower mentioned problems with labor. "In part, it's a problem of education, he noted. "Many growers don't know they don't come under Act 93. So when the inspectors show up and tell them they want to see their records, they don't know enough to tell them to hit the road."

Act 93, requires people who use migrant labor to register their employees, pay the minimum wage, and permits entry and access to grower records and payroll.

Mack Reese, of Chester County, noted growers use "seasonal," not "migrant" labor.

Other problems mentioned at the meeting included diseases, fuel, transportation and pricing.

State Representative Gibson Armstrong, of

Lancaster County, and Walker's office were also present at the meeting as representatives of Congressman Robert observers.

Mushrooms

(Continued from Page A1)

Wednesday's proposal is hardly a remedy. "ITC handed it to Carter to let him off the political hook," he said.

Zemaitis pointed out the ITC quota will allow Carter to take some action while not really stemming the flow of foreign mushrooms.

U.S. production figures show it costs about 60 cents a pound to produce mushrooms. Far Eastern growers produce mushrooms for about 22 cents.

Zemaitis said he will encourage other organizations in the coalition to write Carter a letter asking for a much stricter quantity limit—one closer to the 50 tons originally proposed by the group.

The Grange, which joined PFU early in the fight to obtain quotas, held a meeting of its own in Oakryn this week. For details, see accompanying article.

Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, until this week, had done little one way or the other on the mushroom situation.

Explained PFA's Richard W Newpher, the state group has let the national Farm Bureau handle the mushroom situation.

Traditionally, Farm Bureau has been against any quotas. But it supported beef quotas and probably will favor the mushroom quotas, he said.

PFA was represented at this week's mushroom meeting in Kennett Square, sponsored by State

Representative Joseph R. Pitts.

PFA has policy to support "the continuing efforts of the mushroom farmers in Pennsylvania and the United States to obtain quantitative limitations of imported mushrooms."

This is basically what the ITC voted for Wednesday.

Should the President again ignore ITC's recommendation, both Farmers' Union and Grange have made it quite clear they will seek legislative relief for the mushroom growers. This route would go through the U.S. Congress rather than the President.

Farm Bureau opposes legislative quotas. Newpher indicated PFA probably would ask whether its board wanted to file an exception to national policy. That would allow PFA to support the other farm groups seeking legislative relief.

Next Thursday, August 14, the ITC report will go to President Carter.

Carter will have 60 days, until October 14, to act on the ITC recommendation.

Latest speculation from political insiders is that mushroom growers may get a kinder reception in Washington this time than in previous rounds.

One reason is Carter's decision will have to be made before the November presidential election. Pennsylvania is seen by many political observers as a possible swing state, one where the President may not want to encounter resistance even from a group as small as the state's mushroom farmers.

Attention Beef & Pork Raisers

CUSTOM BUTCHERING



HESS' BUTCHER SHOP

2635 Willow Street Pike
Willow Street, PA

717-464-3374

—We Process the Old Fashioned Way—

- Pudding
- Hams
- Bologna
- Scrapple
- Bacons
- Dry Beef

We also Specialize in Beef
For Your Freezer, Sides of Pork,
Sides of Beef.

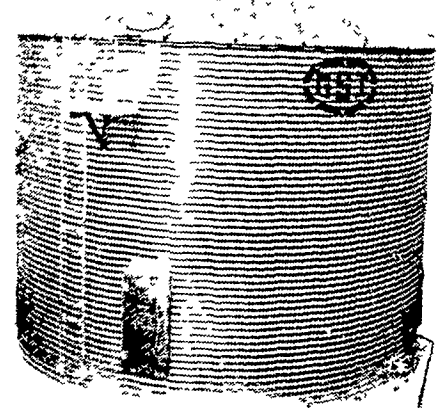
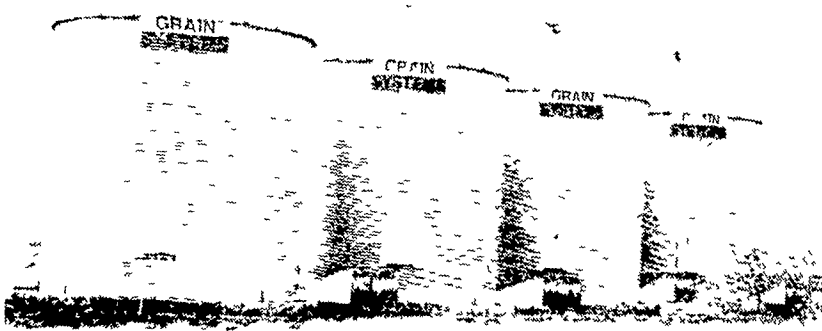
THE SYSTEMS PEOPLE

POULTRY, GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT



A GSI ON-FARM STORAGE SYSTEM

NEW 4" WIDE FARM BIN WITH CORRUGATED ROOF



FEATURING:

- All galvanized steel with G-90 galvanized coating, including galvanized doors.
- Our steel is A446 Quality or a minimum yield of 40,000 pounds per square inch.
- Walk around steps on top of roof.
- Equipped with safety rings.
- No welding anywhere on roof, prevents rust.
- Slotted holes to raise & lower roof for air movement for drying.

SPECIAL SALE ON IN STOCK GRAIN EQUIPMENT

- GRAIN BINS
- AERATION FLOORS
- AERATION FANS
- NEW & USED DRYERS
- GRAIN SPREADERS
- GRAIN CLEANERS
- AUGER EQUIPMENT

SERVING THE INDUSTRY OVER 20 YEARS



FULL LINE PARTS DEPARTMENT

★ WE SELL, SERVICE AND INSTALL

DIRECTIONS TO EM HERR FARM & HOME SUPPLY

