

## Drought, heat affect crop, livestock outlook

LITITZ — Hot, dry weather has eroded crop prospects in the Southern and Central Plains, parts of the Northern Plains, the Southeast, and parts of the Corn Belt. The extended period of high temperatures has stressed livestock, slowed the rate of weight gain for cattle, hogs, and broilers; and caused some loss of broilers as well as broiler breeder hens.

To date, some farmers have suffered severe crop damage or loss.

Crop yields in the affected areas will be lower than they would have been otherwise, and it is clear that the record feed, grain and oilseed production levels of the past two years will not be repeated. Cotton yields are also expected to fall short of last year's record.

However, August is a

critical month, particularly for soybeans, and the eventual U.S. crop production will depend on the temperature and precipitation patterns in coming weeks.

Prospects for grains and oilseeds to be marketed in the second half of 1980 improved significantly during July as prices rallied sharply in response to reduced crop prospects and continued good export movement.

The higher loan rates announced on July 28 will also tend to strengthen grain prices late this summer and fall. Loan rates were raised seven percent for feed grains, 12 percent for soybeans, and 20 percent for wheat. These higher loan levels automatically boost the "release" and "call"

prices for grains held in the farmer-owned reserve.

Cash receipts for livestock in the second half will improve substantially from the first half of 1980 and from the last half of 1979 as well. However, even with this improvement, livestock receipts for the entire year may not be much higher than in 1979.

After inventory adjustment, net farm income for calendar 1980 could be down a fourth or more from last year's preliminary estimate of \$33.3 billion. An expected gain of four to six percent in farm cash receipts will be more than offset by a 10 to 12 percent rise in production costs.

The expansion phase of the beef cattle cycle is now underway. The July 1 inventory of all cattle and calves on farms was four

percent larger than a year earlier. An even stronger indication of this herd rebuilding was the six-percent increase in beef cow numbers. This year's calf crop is also forecast up 6 percent, which could contribute to further expansion.

on herd size and beef production in 1982.

Retail food prices are still expected to be up 7 to 11 percent in 1980, with the current assessment holding at 8.5 percent. This assessment assumes retail food prices will increase at a

12 to 14 percent annual rate during the third quarter, primarily because of price gains for beef, pork, and poultry; however, the rate of increase will be moderated somewhat in the fourth quarter by larger meat supplies.

### Lancaster 4-H Council meets

LANCASTER — The Lancaster 4-H County Council will be sponsoring Achievement Day and a roller skate for all 4-H'ers.

The Council, open to all teens, needs help to prepare for Achievement Day, Wednesday, at 7 p.m. at the Farm and Home Center. Thursday is Achievement Day with registration from 12:30 p.m. - 2 p.m.

Afternoon activities, supper at 7 p.m. and an evening program consisting of talent and queen contests,

awards, and recognition of outstanding 4-Hers will be held.

The rollerskate on Monday, September 8 will be held at the Greenfield

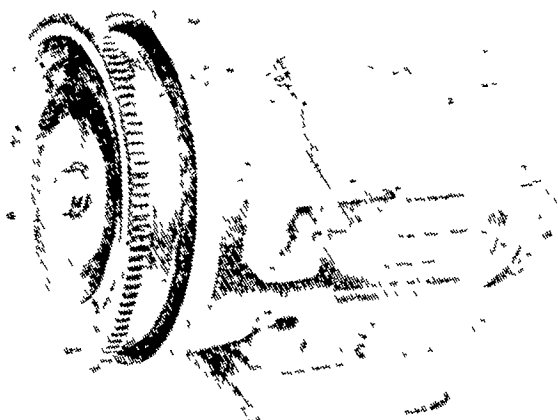
Skatearama from 7-10 p.m. in the evening. Tickets will be distributed throughout the clubs at a later date. Call 717/872-7389 if none are available in your club. Reported by John Charles.

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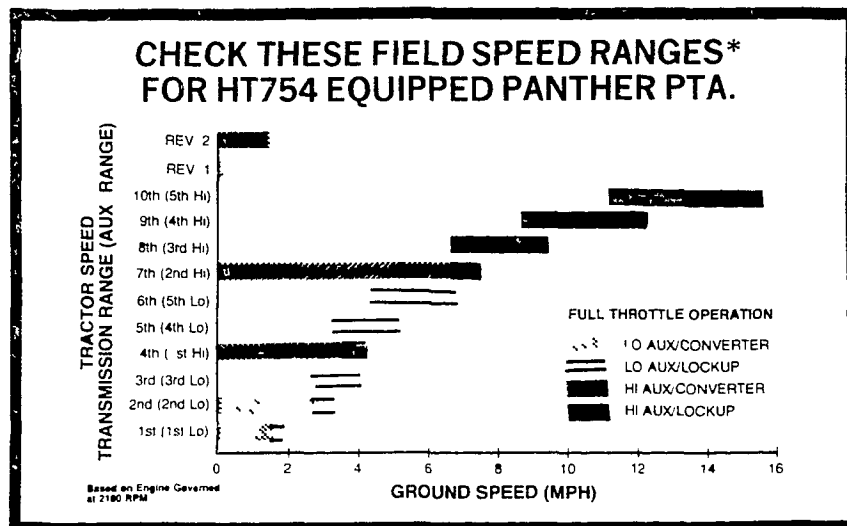
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