

Better prices predicted for cow-calf operators

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Things are looking up for cow-calf cattle producers for the rest of 1980 and the first quarter of 1981, but for stockers, feeders and packers the short-term outlook is a bit shaky.

That's the consensus of four top livestock economists participating in a "cattle cycle forum" sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Participating in the forum were Glenn Grimes, professor of agricultural economics at the University of Missouri; Wayne D. Purcell, professor of agricultural economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute; Robert J. Reiersen, agricultural economist consultant and former corporate economist for Monfort of Colorado; and Edward Uvacek Jr., livestock marketing economist and associate professor at Texas A&M University.

For the next three or four

years, the cow-calf operator should be in a profitable position, but cattle feeders will face slim profits due to excess finishing capacity.

The July 1 cattle inventory report issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on July 28 showed that the 1980 calf crop is up six percent over last year. While the economists questioned the accuracy of the increase, they agreed that the 1980 calf crop is larger.

While the expansion phase of the cattle cycle is normally a profitable time for cow-calf producers, the economists stressed that risk-management is the key to profitability in the future.

The economists agreed that the current rate of growth in the national herd is large, based on the July 1 report, and the industry will be in trouble if this rate of growth continues for several years.

They said a less than two percent rate of growth in beef cow numbers for a

period of several years could be tolerated but that a rate of growth in excess of two percent for several years would mean trouble, given the outlook for beef demand.

The indications are that in 1984 and 1985, there could be an excessive oversupply of red meat if the beef and pork

cycles peak at the same time, similar to the situation that occurred in late 1973 and early 1974. Beef and pork producers must do a better job of managing herd expansion to avoid glutting the market with price depressing supplies of red meat, the economists said.

Lebanon 4-H'ers win

UNIVERSITY PARK — Thirty-one 4-H members from Lebanon County participated in Penn State 4-H Achievement Days this week at the Campus.

The Lebanon Foodarama team brought home first place honors to the County Members of that team — Megan Connor, 410 Davis Lane, Lebanon; Janet Brandt, 333 E. Locust Street, Lebanon; and Lorah Spangler, 401 South College Street, Myerstown all received blue ribbons.

Shannon Johnson, R4 Lebanon, placed first in the Senior Girl Physical Fitness

competition. Other honors brought home to Lebanon County were:

Clothing judging: Blue — Fawn Showers, R7 Lebanon, and Diane Smith, Rexmont.

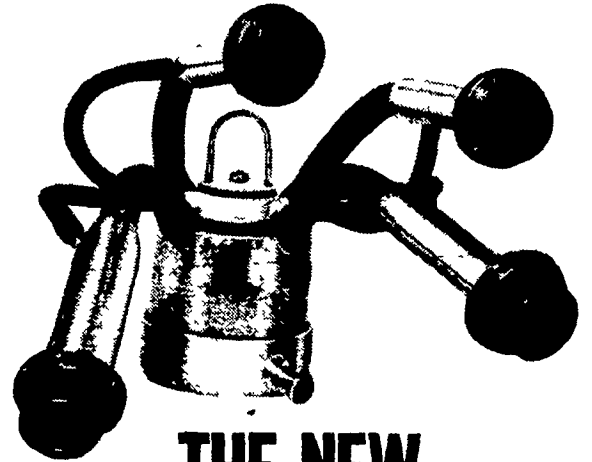
Physical fitness, Senior girl: 4. Karen Hoke, Lebanon; Junior girl: 3. Bonnie Bordner, Lebanon.

Entomology judging teams: Lebanon's team consisting of Bruce Hellerick, Erik Silldorff and Jon Fetter placed 2nd and Jon Fetter, Lebanon, placed fourth as an individual.

Lebanon's team placed tenth in the horse judging team competition.

The forum will meet again in early 1981 to review the cattle situation and track the developments of the cattle cycle and the economic implications for producers.

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