

Lower red meat, poultry output expected

LANCASTER — During the rest of 1980, supplies of pork, broilers, and eggs will fall short of year-earlier levels as production cut-backs planned earlier in the year-plus the impact of this summer's heat and drought-began to take effect.

Beef production, on the other hand, will be slightly higher than last year.

The September 1 inventory of hogs and pigs (in the 14 major producing States) showed market hog numbers down two percent from last year, but still 15 percent larger than in 1978. Farrowings during June-August and farrowing intentions for September-November were both down 10 percent, implying that pork production in the first half of 1981 will fall substantially below year-ago levels.

Farm commodity prices have been rising much faster than input prices in recent months, thus improving farm income prospects for 1980 relative to earlier ex-

pectations. The index of prices received by farmers gained 12 percent from June to September, while the index of prices paid rose only three percent.

Despite this improvement, prices paid by farmers were up 12 percent from a year ago in September, while prices received were up nine percent. Higher feed prices have continued to squeeze livestock producers' margins.

In addition, farmers who lost most or all of their crops to this summer's drought and heat will not share in the improved income situation.

With improved market conditions, total feed grains have shown net movement

out of the farmer owned reserve in recent months.

Corn, which is in release status, has shown the largest absolute drop in farmer-owned reserves, while oats, which are in call status, have shown the largest percentage drop.

Barley is the only feed grain for which net movement has been into the reserve. Wheat has been moving into the reserve in recent weeks, although at a slow pace.

Retail food prices, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, increased 1.5 percent in August—the largest monthly rise since February 1979. The major contributors to the August increase were poultry, pork,

beef, and fresh fruit.

With food prices having risen relatively slowly in the first half of 1980, the total gain this year is expected to be about nine percent—the smallest increase since 1977.

Foreign production of

most crops is expected to turn out better than last year. Foreign output of grains and cotton are forecast up, but oilseed production is not expected to increase. Western Europe is expected to harvest larger

crops despite the damage caused by wet weather in June and July.

Grain production in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is also expected to be up, while China's grain output is expected to fall.

Take care of those tomatoes

NORRISTOWN — Tomato plants have a way of

producing tomatoes until autumn frost puts an end to their efforts. As the first killing frost date approaches, you'll need to harvest them to save them.

If an unexpected frost occurs, you can salvage and ripen tomatoes not damaged by freezing. If you live in an area where outdoor temperatures are likely to range between 32 and 50 degrees F., harvest tomatoes within 4 to 5 days after such temperatures occur to prevent damage by chilling.

Store tomatoes that show red in separate containers from green tomatoes. Pack green tomatoes one or two layers deep in shallow boxes or trays for ripening. Mature green tomatoes reach an eating-ripe stage at 65 to 70 degrees F. in about 14 days.

If you want to slow down ripening, hold the tomatoes at 55 degrees so that mature-green tomatoes will ripen in about 25 to 28 days. Check tomatoes every 7 to 10 days to separate the ones showing red from those still green. And, of course, always remove the decayed ones.

Who farms

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flies three or four days out of the week which gives him two or three days to work on the farm.

"Sometimes I get out of phase if rains put me behind schedule on the farm," Leonard said. "When I get behind the 8 ball, I sometimes work around the clock to catch up with my neighbors."

Along with the field crops, Leonard also raises registered Aberdeen Angus cattle. His herd presently consists of 70 cows, two bulls, and about 90 head of young stock from the past two years.

One of Leonard's goals is to upgrade his cow/calf program.

"I'd like to be well known in the Angus circles for my breeding stock. I hope to get the show barn at the Eisenhower Farm set up like it was when General Eisenhower kept his show cattle ready for the public to view."

Leonard is continuing to carry out Eisenhower's wishes that the farms be better through conservation and good management. Leonard, along with technicians from the local USDA Soil Conservation Service office, established most of the strip cropping systems on the land, re-established waterways, and installed 4000 feet of drainage tile.

When Leonard was asked if after eight years experience in the farming business he would do it all over again, his reply was:

"Definitely. I enjoy farming as much as I do flying. I feel I have the best of two worlds.

"My only regret is that I didn't keep a day to day diary so that when I retire I can write a book."

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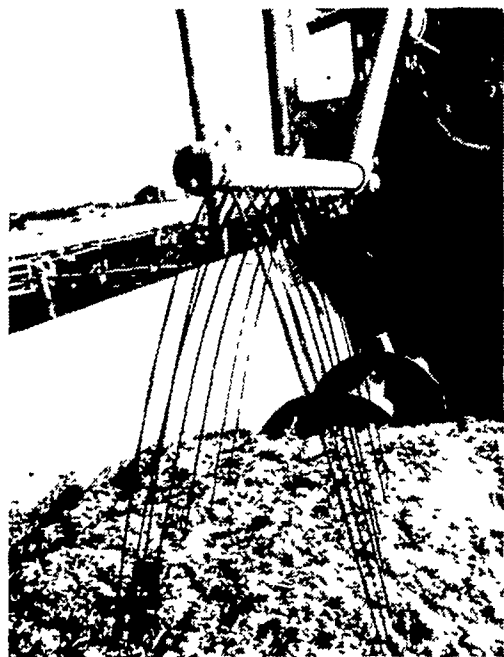
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