

Lancaster beef producers tour industry's start to finish

LANCASTER — Over 100 beef producers from Lancaster and surrounding counties hopped on tour buses Tuesday to take a closer look at their industry's end result and two Berks County feedlots.

The first stop of the day was the Moyer Packing Company located in Souderton. The beef producers disembarked to take a first hand look at a modern packing operation, starting with cattle waiting in holding pens to boxes of beef being wheeled into waiting refrigerator trailers.

Robert Summy, R1 Manheim, is the head buyer for MOPAC. He told the group some of the statistics and history of the plant.

The butchering business was a family tradition for the Moyers, starting back in 1885 with Jacob Freed. The daughter of Freed became the wife of Abram F. Moyer and in 1910 the two of them and their four sons, Nelson, Abram, Jacob and Curtis took over Freed's butchering business.

From then on, Moyer's business grew larger and expanded with many changes over the years. The latest change is the expansion of the plant, with the completion of the 4-month-old boning, bagging, boxing, and shipping departments.

The beef producers listened closely to Summy's explanation on the complexities of the plant's operations. They learned that Moyer Packing Co. buys cattle in 11 states.

Summy reported 85-90% of the cattle bought in Lancaster County are purchased during the summer months; other months of the year, the cattle are bought out West and shipped in.

Summy also pointed out the plant slaughters cows, steers, heifers and bulls depending on market conditions. "At times, cows make up three-quarters of the day's kill, but normally we kill about 600 steers and 300 cows in a day."

The touring beef



Glen Moyer, son of one of Moyer Packing Co's four founding fathers, tells a group of Lancaster County beef producers about the company's new boxing plant.



Robert Heffner's feedlots, located near Fleetwood, Berks County, showed the beef producers a new face to a metal pole building. Heffner tacked wooden siding on his barn to keep the cold winter air out like snowfence traps snow.

producers were amazed at the fact that in only 20 minutes from the time an animal is stunned, it is hanging in the chill cooler.

Nothing is wasted during the meat processing, explained Summy. Waste products go to North Penn Hide Company, an affiliate of Moyer Packing Co., and are rendered into blood meal, bone meal, protein meal, and tallow. Hides are cured and tanned there and are later sold and used for leather products, such as shoes, belts, handbags, and other items.

Summy raised some eyebrows with the amazing statistic that the plant processes 1½ cattle per minute or 90 cattle per hour on the fabrication floor.

(Turn to Page A38)



Doris Lorah tells the group of over 100 cattlemen about her father's feedlot. Doris is the daughter of Henry Eyrich, R1 Oley. Their operation moves about 1600 head through each year. Holding the loudspeaker is Moyer's Bob Summy.



House grader Dale Monnin explains to the group how the meat is graded while the Federal grader passes judgement on the line.

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