



Brief answers
to short questions
**Sheila's
Shorts**
By Sheila Miller

Just Coincidence?
In last week's issue of *Lancaster Farming*, I began a series on rural crime and its growing occurrence in the US. It seems as if I've touched on a topic that has stabbed at a greater number of farmers in our area than I suspected. I began the series with a fictitious account of teenagers trying to have some fun by turning out a farmer's cows. This story was based on statistics documented by the Ohio State research team on rural crime — who does it, when is it most likely to occur. This report comprises the gist of this week's article on rural crime found in Section B. Since the first article of the series came out, I have had several farmers tell me how current the problem is — a living nuisance or nightmare for many. One farmer recounted how vandals entered his hog finishing barn late one night and turned the hogs out of their pens. The fun for the hogs turned to fighting and tearing into the fiberglass insulation around the barn's furnace. The next morning, the farmer walked into the barn to find two dead hogs —

killed from the stress and fighting that occurred when the pens were mixed. He figured the loss at several hundred dollars. The insulation around the furnace was shredded and destroyed. The prank of the vandals cost the farmer another couple hundred dollars. Slightly more difficult to calculate the loss, the farmer also said he felt all of his hogs were set back — fiberglass and fighting are not great methods for putting on pounds of pork. Again, more feed costs to finish out the barn meant more expense for the farmer. What happened to the vandals? As the farmer recalled, somewhat disturbed by the outcome, he reported the incident to the local police who offered to patrol the area more frequently. Needless to say, the culprits were never caught. Now, the farmer said, he has installed a floodlight and locks on all the doors of his barns. Additional expense and aggravation — but a necessity to try to prevent other occurrences of vandalism from taking place. Another farmer told me

how local police busted a drug pusher at the farm. He told how the peddler was parking his car along the road behind a fence row — a secluded pick-up point. How long this was going on before the bust was remains an unanswered question. Striking a bit closer to home, neighbors recently had their mailboxes torn from their posts and stuffed with beer cans. Don't people respect property of the federal government anymore? If apprehended in the act, these vandals could be charged with a federal offense. But that's the trick — catching them. And even if you do, you might find they're people you know. And, depending on the police authorities and lawyers, the vandals might get off scot-free anyway. All the time and effort of prosecuting has cost a lot more than just hammering the mailbox back in place. How do you cope with this problem? By trying to solve it — and that doesn't mean ignoring it or thinking it will just go away. Farmers need to get back in touch with neighbors. They need to watch out for each other's well-being. Other precautionary measures could include installing locks on barn doors and gas pumps, putting up floodlights, keeping a good watch dog around — and checking to see what it's barking about, even if it's only a stray cat. For more ideas on how to make rural crime more trouble than it's worth, read next week's issue of *Lancaster Farming*. Even though it's three

PMMB to face fire

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Such a process would give opponents of any agency, including PMMB, a chance to close it down or at least to modify its structure or purpose. Common Cause said it definitely will fight for sunset laws in the coming legislative session. Olson would seem to agree with Common Cause that the purpose of PMMB should be modified. "The price fixing power of the Board is unfair," she maintains. "There is nothing wrong with the basic milk marketing law if it is properly administered. I don't think it is properly administered," she says. "It is always a fight and it's hard for consumers," she says. Dealers have attorneys and accountants to speak for them, farmers are well represented by PFA and the Grange. But, Olson says, it is unlikely a group of people in the neighborhood are going to get together to pay \$20,000 a year to testify at a milk board hearing. "All I want is to get consumers a fair shake," she says. "What if there were an oil board with Gulf, Standard and some housewife running things. Do you think the days late, add one more item to your list of New Year's resolutions — safeguard your farm in 1981. It's time to be safe rather than sorry.

consumer would get a fair shake?" she asks. Olson said she feels it is appalling there are two industry representatives on the board. "It really is wrong," she maintains. Olson said she would like to see better representation, someone from another walk of life. The impact of such a move would be to remove the two-to-one margin held by dairy interests on the Board, a long-standing tradition. Repeating that his group does not yet have a policy on PMMB, Thomas DeWall, executive director for Common Cause of Pennsylvania, said Common Cause may favor abolishing PMMB's price-setting function while keeping other functions like the Board's standards setting powers. On the other hand, farm groups generally support PMMB. Pennsylvania Farmers' Association policy, adopted last month, strongly supports PMMB and recommends, "The minimum

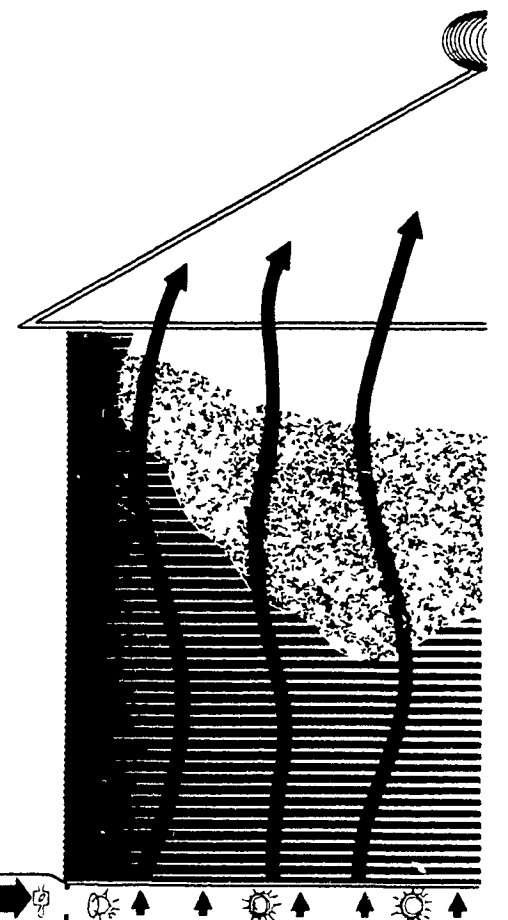


THINK AHEAD...
Read Futures Markets on Page 3.



ANDY GLICK, Oley, Pa.
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for
less than
I used
to pay for
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