

Annual meeting Sunday evening

Sheep growers to discuss three-way research funding

HARRISBURG — Lambing percentages in Pennsylvania increased substantially in 1980 according to Penrose Hallowell, Secretary of Agriculture for the Commonwealth.

The increase from 102 percent in 1979 to 119 percent in 1980 still falls well below the percentage required to make sheep keeping profitable, Annette Menhennett, ovine medicine chairman of the Pennsylvania-Maryland Shropshire Association says.

When David C Petritz of Purdue University studied the money-making potentials of the sheep industry he found that a lamb crop of 125 percent from a 100 ewe flock and lambs marketed at \$65 per cwt would put the shepherd in the red to the tune of \$819.25. Petritz found that lamb crops of 150 percent were necessary to break even and crops over 175 percent for profit.

This year the profit squeeze for Pennsylvania's shepherds will be even more severe with the high cost of feed. In the past year corn has risen in price from \$2.83 per bushel to \$3.74.

Hay prices have soared too with alfalfa reaching \$100 per ton or more.

Despite the difficulties Menhennett says the potential for profit in the sheep industry exists.

One item that must be amortized into production costs is the expense of replacing ewes. Under present sheep husbandry systems, the life expectancy of a ewe is only eight years. Her productive years average between six and seven.

Extending the productive life of the ewe may be one of the most important factors in improving the profit picture. Many ewes have been known to remain

productive up to 12 years of age.

However, disease problems like chronic pneumonia, mastitis, and nutritional deficiencies like molybdenum and selenium contribute to the shortened lifespan of the ewe.

Veterinary scientists could do much to help the sheep industry if they would study these problems.

Breeding ewe lambs is an absolute essential to make the flock profitable.

Early breeding is necessary to off-set the carrying costs of replacement ewes. It also adds another year to the productive lifespan of the ewe. Therefore by breeding the ewe so that she produces a lamb crop during her first year and keeping her alive and producing in the flock until she is 12 or older, the shepherd can add five years to the normal seven productive years of the ewe.

The problem is keeping her alive and healthy, and that is where veterinary scientists are so desperately needed.

The Pennsylvania-Maryland Shropshire Association has been urging Secretary Hallowell to help them get an ovine specialist assigned to the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine.

These sheep producers would like veterinary students to be taught more about sheep health problems. They also hope that through research, problems like extending the productive life of the ewe can be solved.

Dr. Robert Marshak, Dean of the Veterinary School, repeatedly has told the sheep producers that there are no

funds available for an ovine program.

One recent suggestion for funding the program will be discussed at the Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers' meeting during the Farm Show.

The proposal calls for a tripartite financial arrangement wherein the Department of Agriculture,

the Extension Service and the School of Veterinary Medicine would share the costs.

The Department of Agriculture would basically pay for the research part of the program. The Extension Service would fund the costs of seminars and workshops for sheep producers and practicing veterinarians.

The Veterinary School would pick up the tab for classroom instruction for veterinary students and facilities.

The Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers' meeting will be held Sunday, January 11 at 7 p.m. in Room B of the Farm Show's Main Exhibition Building. All sheep producers are urged to attend.

Conte, Inc. loses its produce license

PALM — A Pennsylvania firm, Conte, Inc. of Palm, has become ineligible to operate in the produce industry under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act and had its license suspended for failing to pay a reparation award of \$34,470.

U.S. Department of Agriculture officials said the award was in favor of a New Jersey shipper for 55 loads of tomatoes sold between August 14 and September 5, 1979.

The Palm firm had an opportunity to answer the shipper's charges. However, the firm did not respond, and USDA ordered payment of the amount claimed.

The action affects the firm and also its officers and

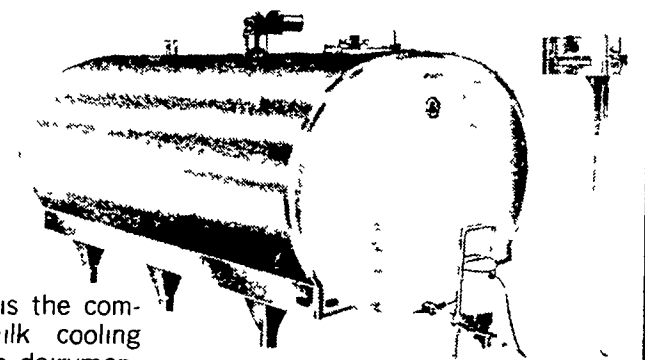
major stockholders, American Speciality Foods, Inc., James L. Price, George H. McLaughlin, Samuel J. Schreffler, and Lilly M. Minotto, who may not be employed by or affiliated with any PACA licensee without USDA approval.

Charles Brader, an official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the act provides for damages to be paid by those who fail to meet their contractual obligations in buying and selling fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables.

He said interstate traders must be licensed, and the law requires that their licenses be suspended if they fail to pay reparation awards.

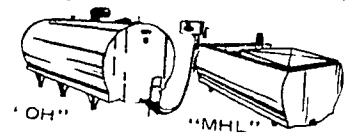
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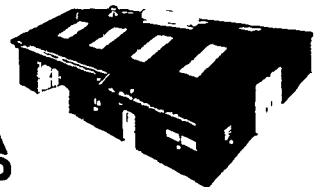


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