

Crops day

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trol, reduce soil erosion, and aids in insect and disease control

He noted, however, some crops needed in crop rotations are not economically competitive in the market. Also, farmers growing a more diversified crop need more expertise in different areas, along with more machinery. Whether a farmer can adapt an operation to crop rotation depends, also, on available markets and labor

For those who feel crop rotations are out of the question, Hoffman suggested these alternatives: chemical pesticides, commercial fertilizer, resistance plant varieties, reduced tillage, and cover crops in intensive corn and soybean cultures to conserve soil, moisture and fertility

Hoffman cited studies comparing crop yields of various crop rotations. It came as a shock to some farmers to learn that over a 7 year period, fields planted to continuous corn experienced a 14 bushel per acre decrease in yield when compared to a field where

the rotation was corn, oats, wheat, followed by two years of alfalfa.

"Crop rotations add tilth and structure to the soil," said Hoffman. "If you're going to a monoculture, you need to cover crop and reduce tillage to increase soil structure."

Two economists were on the program Roland Freund, Penn State Area Farm Management Specialist, advised the farmers on determining the economics of raising corn, alfalfa, and soybeans through proper record-keeping. And Lou Moore gazed into his crystal ball to see the future of grain prices in the coming year

According to Moore, grain marketing in the 1980's is a new ball game dependent on many factors, from the political regime in Washington to the weather. He informed the farmers a 500,000 ton grain market to China that was supposed to salvage the economic plight of the American farmers was recently cancelled because the Chinese simply ran out of money

There are supply problems in all grains except wheat, he announced. Wheat acres are up 11 percent nationwide, he said, with

the soft red winter wheat acreage up 35 percent. If the acres planted produce a crop, Moore stated the price of wheat will fall dramatically - resulting in livestock feeders using wheat in rations rather than corn.

The corn carryover is critical, Moore noted. "Feed use must drop 4 percent over the next nine months if exports are to reach the projected 2.6 billion bushel target and the inventory stays at a minimal level. This means rationing our corn supply which we do with high prices." He stated the corn inventory, as of January, is down 15 percent

Moore's soybean outlook was not bright, either. He said he recently learned the South American crop looked like it would be a record harvest. These beans, he said, will take our western European market

Moore closed by suggesting grain producers consider marketing their crops through livestock. "In the past, you've always gotten more for corn by selling it through livestock," he said

For those farmers marketing the

crop as grain, Moore suggested each farmer "get to know a reputable grain dealer, establish a good reputation, and know and follow the futures markets."

Penn State Extension Agronomist Ray Shipp brought the farmers up-to-date on the recent changes in soil test recommendations. As a result of a change in method used for determining lime requirement, Shipp informed the group Penn State soil tests now call for more lime per acre. He also noted Penn State has lowered nitrogen

recommendations in some cases depending on previous crops and manure applications

"The old rule of thumb that it takes one pound of nitrogen to grow one bushel of corn has been found to be quite true," he concluded. To determine maximum yield, Shipp recommended multiplying the corn plant population by 3 grams of nitrogen per plant. This figure is divided by 454 grams per pound to determine the pounds of nitrogen needed per acre

Berks Beef Feeders Meeting

BERHEL - Lester Burdette, Penn State Extension beef specialist and H. Louise Moore, Penn State Extension economist Professor will highlight the Beef Feeders Meeting on February 24. Sponsored by Berks and Lebanon Extension, the program will be held at Trainers Mid-Way Diner, located at Exit 5 on I-78 (Rt. 22)

The program will start at 5:30 p.m. Coffee and donuts will be available for those visiting the

commercial exhibits. A beef barbecue dinner will follow at 6 p.m. The remainder of the program will include: pesticide update training, by Clyde Myers, Berks Co. Agent, least cost rations by Les Burdette, beef outlook, by Lou Moore, and alternate feeds, including poultry manure and apple pumice, presented by panel members Gerald Bowman, beef feeder; Les Burdette, Kenny Rarick, beef feeder and Robert Shanner, beef feeder

Reservations are needed by February 23, 1981. Cost is \$2 per person. Call Clyde A. B. Myers, Berks Co. Extension Agent at (215) 378-1327 at the Berks Co. Extension Office



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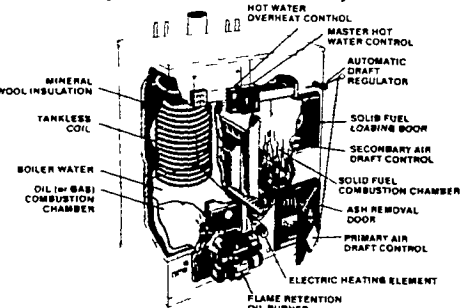
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