

Poultry production up, but prices remain strong

LITITZ — Prospects for reduced supplies of pork coupled with continued strong export demand for poultry and eggs are expected to keep first-half 1981 prices of broilers, eggs, and turkeys well above depressed levels of last year.

However, rising production costs will offset these price increases. Turkey and broiler output is likely to exceed last year's levels, while egg production may be about the same.

Egg production in 1981 will probably continue about the same as last year. Following negative returns most of last year, the number of young pullets entering the laying flock continues to trail 1980 levels, and the average age of the laying flock is older. Producers will probably keep the old hens in the flock to maintain output.

Egg production in the first quarter may be down 1 percent from a year earlier, because of one less production day in February; but second-quarter production may equal April-June 1980.

February egg prices in New York averaged about 71 cents per dozen, 10 cents below December, but 11 cents above February 1980. Prices may average 72 to 74 cents for the entire quarter.

Prices usually weaken in the spring. However, reduced supplies of meat may limit the decline this year. Egg prices during April-June may hold near first quarter levels.

Broiler meat will continue to increase this year. In 1980, output in federally inspected slaughter plants totaled 11 billion pounds, two percent above 1979.

Weekly slaughter reports and chick placements suggest that January-March broiler output will be one to three percent above the 2.7 billion pounds produced in first-quarter 1980.

Production this spring is expected to rise seasonally and continue about two percent above year-earlier levels.

The nine-city weighted average broiler price in February 1981 was 50 cents per pound, about 7 cents

above last year.

First quarter broiler prices may average seven to nine cents per pound above the 43 cents a year earlier. Bolstered by declining red meat supplies, broiler prices are expected to show a small seasonal rise, averaging in the low 50's during the spring.

Even with these higher prices, many producers may still only break even.

Profitable operations in the last half of 1980 encouraged turkey producers to increase production for 1981. Weekly slaughter reports and production of poults indicate that first-half turkey meat output will be five to seven percent above the 897 million pounds produced in January-June 1980.

Wholesale prices in New York for 8-16 pound young hen turkeys declined from holiday levels but are now above last year. Prices

averaged about 60 cents per pound in February, up from 58 cents in 1980.

First quarter prices may average 59-61 cents a pound, slightly above last year's 59 cents. Even with increased production, turkey prices during January-June are expected to average 60 cents a pound, because red meat supplies will be declining.

Pork Council urges full research funding

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Speaking before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Ritchie Jordan of Suffolk, Virginia, Chairman of NPPC's Legislative Committee and Jack Rundquist, Butler, Illinois, Chairman of

NPPC's Research and Education Committee strongly urged full funding of animal agriculture research projects.

"We are pleased to see even modest increased in funding for

basic research," said Rundquist. "Investments in creative, innovative research are truly investments in the future. We hope that a substantial portion of the overall increase for basic research will be allocated to swine."

While the Council was pleased with some of the increases in funds for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, it expressed alarm that pseudorabies was not addressed in the budget.

"We cannot understand the proposed decreases in swine disease surveillance and pseudorabies," Rundquist told the Committee.

Pseudorabies is a herpes virus disease for which eradication is being discussed. NPPC advocates more research on vaccines and tests for infected animals and more epidemiological work before

any eradication program is attempted.

Jordan and Rundquist strongly suggested Congress reinstate at least \$6.5 million to the cooperative research program. "For this research to be meaningful and useful, the researchers must be able to depend upon renewed funding to conduct their ongoing projects," added Rundquist.

Both men commended the President's efforts to bring inflation under control but emphasized that agricultural research is one of the basic tools of all farmers and necessary if farmers are to feed the ever growing U.S. and world population.

NPPC made similar points in testimony offered Tuesday before the House Appropriations Subcommittee.

Pa. Plowing Committee urges conservation

YORK — The Pennsylvania Plowing Contest Committee, organized to promote good soil stewardship, has a reminder for farmers as they plan for the 1981 planting season.

"Think soil conservation when planning crop sequences," is the suggestion they're sending out to the Commonwealth's farmers.

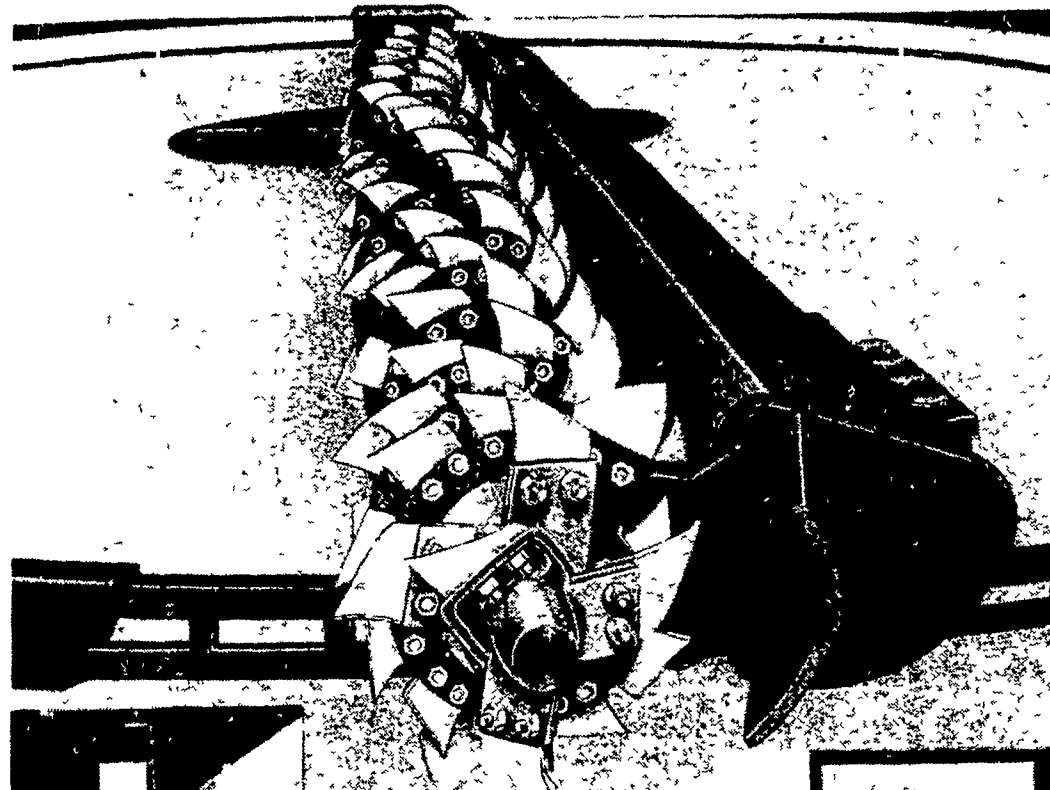
In spite of current low moisture levels, the Committee asks all growers to keep in mind the likelihood of periods of excess

water, when runoff will have to be diverted safely from the fields.

According to the Plowing Committee, probably the most abused conservation practice today is the lack of sod waterways, one of the most successful methods in use to safely carry excess water from fields.

Due to Federal concern for clean streams and economic benefits to all farmers, the state's plowing enthusiasts ask each farmer's help in keeping erosion to a minimum.

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