

PFU voices grain price concerns

ALLENTOWN — The Pennsylvania Farmers Union Advisory Board expressed serious concern over the future of Pennsylvania wheat farmers.

It was noted at the group's June 24th meeting held here Wednesday that a Pennsylvania grain elevator was quoting a price of \$3.35 per bushel for wheat on June 23.

This price, just prior to wheat harvest time, marks the third successive year of lower local prices for the commodity. If this trend continues, many of Penn-

sylvania's family farmers face serious problems, predicts PFU.

Wheat at \$3.35 is significantly less than the cost of producing the commodity, which is estimated to be \$5.50 per bushel, PFU pointed out. This means farmers, forced to sell the grain at local elevators will be losing about \$2 per bushel.

Consumers should be aware that the wheat farmer receives about 5 cents for the value of the product in a single one pound loaf of bread, they advised. The entire remaining

cost is attributed to milling, transportation, labor, packaging and advertising.

The Farmers Union Advisory Committee stated that the state's

farmers have such a small margin to begin with and these ever declining prices for wheat pose serious threats to the survival of the family grain farmer in Penn-

sylvania. The Farmers Union has consequently called for grain prices which will cover the cost of production and return a reasonable profit.

Grain stocks down

HARRISBURG — Total stocks of wheat, corn, oats, barley, sorghum and soybeans in Pennsylvania on June 1, at 44.4 million bushels, were down 25 percent from a year ago, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service. Farm stocks were down 27 percent at 37.1 million bushels. Off-farm holdings of 7.3 million bushels decreased 16 percent from a year ago.

Corn stored in all positions totaled 36.0 million bushels, 29 percent below last year's 50.6 million in storage. Wheat stocks totaled 2.5 million bushels, eight percent above the 2.3 million bushels on hand a year earlier.

Oats stocks at 5.0 million bushels were up two percent from a year ago. Barley in all storage positions, at 431,000 bushels, were down 43 percent from last year's

level of 756,000 bushels. The 390,000 bushels of soybean stocks were 47 percent below last year's holdings.

At the national level, corn stored in all positions on June 1 totaled 2.77 billion bushels, 24 percent below last year's record high 3.67 billion bushels. Farm stocks totaled 1.82 billion bushels, down 29 percent from a year earlier.

Old crop wheat stored in all positions amounted to 991 million bushels, 10 percent greater than the 902 million bushels on hand last year and seven percent more than two years ago. Old crop oat stocks in all storage positions amounted to 176 million bushels, 25 percent less than a year ago and 37 percent less than on the same date in 1971. Old crop barley stocks in all positions totaled 137 million bushels, 29 percent less than last year's 192 million.

Edwards assessed \$270,000

FLEETVILLE — A Fleetville, meat packing firm and its president have been assessed \$270,000 in civil penalties by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and ordered to stop violating trust requirements of the Packers and Stockyards Act.

Named in the order are R&D Investments, Inc., doing business as Edwards Bros. Packing Co., and John W. Edwards, the firm's president. Under Edwards' direction, the firm bought livestock for slaughter principally from Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Virginia. The firm is no longer operating.

Administrative Law Judge John

Liebert assessed the civil penalty and ordered Edwards and his firm to cease and desist from failing to hold inventory, receivables and proceeds from the cash sale of livestock for the benefit of all unpaid cash sellers of livestock.

James L. Smith, P&S official, said the trust violations charged by USDA occurred in 1977 and 1978, but the complaint was delayed both to allow for pending litigation and to prevent any interference with attempts to negotiate settlements for the injured parties.


Smith said the order was issued in default when Edwards and his firm failed to respond to charges in USDA's administrative complaint.

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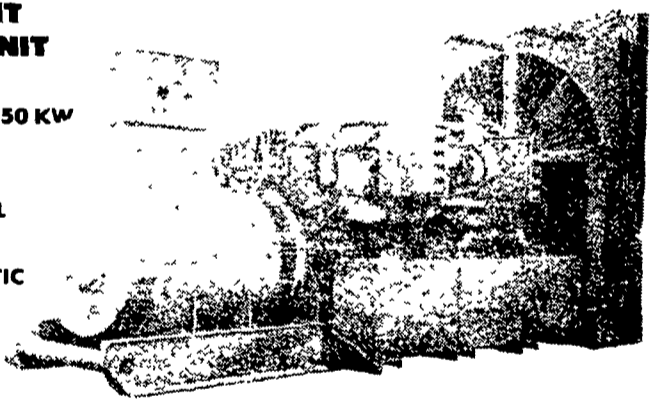
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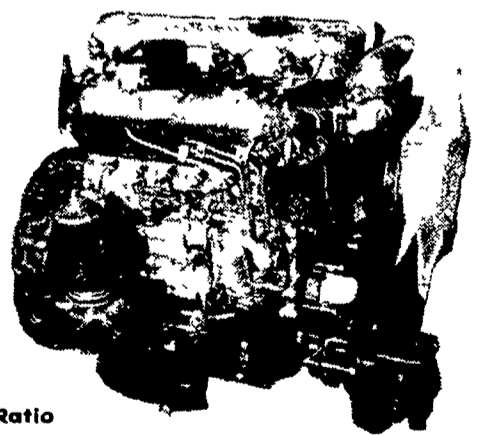


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