

NCA asks for interest rate decline

DENVER, Colo. — The National Cattleman's Assn. has asked President Reagan to help see that interest rates are permitted to decline evenly and slowly over the next several months.

In a letter to the President, NCA President J.W. (Bill) Swan said, "I cannot over-emphasize the seriousness of the cost of money to cattlemen. Since 1976, the interest cost of raising a calf or feeding out a steer has risen from about 5 percent of the total cost to 14 percent—an increase of 270 percent. This increase in interest costs represents the difference between profit and loss in our very low-margin industry."

"We continue to support your economic programs. But we feel that the relative risk of maintaining current levels of interest rates, while the economy slows, is so great that an immediate shift is required to allow interest rates to decline evenly and slowly."

Swan said NCA recognizes the need for restraint on money supply in order to control inflation. But, he added, NCA "supports a philosophy of allowing interest rates to adjust slowly in order to prevent a repeat of the 1980 debacle, when interest rates dropped from 21 percent to 12 percent and then returned to 20 percent."

"Neither agriculture nor the cattle industry can tolerate a repeat of the volatile interest rates experienced over the past 18

months. Failure to permit a slow and even decline in interest rates—reflecting changes in economic conditions—could leave agriculture in its worst condition since the 1930's.

"We do not want the administration and Federal Reserve to abandon their inflation battle, but we do feel it is necessary to recognize the risk to the economy and cattle industry of holding to a monetary policy that threatens a repeat of 1980."

Swan's letter to President Reagan followed NCA board of directors action directing that the President's attention be called to the problem of high and volatile interest rates. In other action, the board approved a fiscal 1981-82 program and budget which will further improve NCA's services in government affairs and other areas.

Eggs up slightly

HARRISBURG — July, 1981 egg production in Pennsylvania totaled 348 million according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service. The July production was one percent above the 344 million eggs produced in July, 1980. The July average of 16.2 million layers was one percent higher than a year ago. Egg production per 100 layers was 2,151 compared with 2,157 in July, 1980.

USDA confirms scrapie in Wisconsin sheep flock

HYATTSVILLE, Md. — U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have confirmed the nation's seventh outbreak of scrapie this year — in a flock of 110 sheep in Barron County, Wis.

Officials of the national headquarters of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in Hyattsville, Md., report six other scrapie outbreaks so far this year. These involve sheep in Columbia county, Wis.; New London county, Conn.; Rockingham county, N.H.; Sussex county, N.J.; Ulster county, N.Y., and Harford county, Md.

Dr. A.R. McLaughlin, APHIS veterinarian in charge in Wisconsin, said the infected flock will be destroyed to eliminate the infection, and the owner will be indemnified for his losses.

About 30 sheep were sold out of the flock after having been in contact with animals that developed scrapie. These sheep, which are considered exposed, will be located and destroyed by USDA disease fighters, with indemnities paid to their owners.

McLaughlin said scrapie is a slow-acting but fatal viral disease of sheep and goats that attacks the central nervous system. Since there is no treatment or cure, the disease can be stopped only by destroying all infected and exposed animals.

"It may take months or even years for an animal exposed to the disease to show clinical signs of the infection—usually intense rubbing against fixed objects to relieve itching," McLaughlin said.



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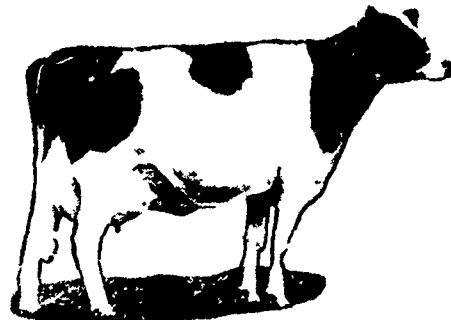
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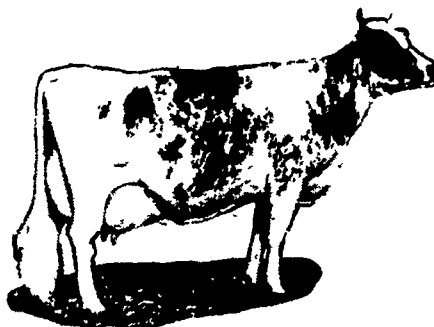
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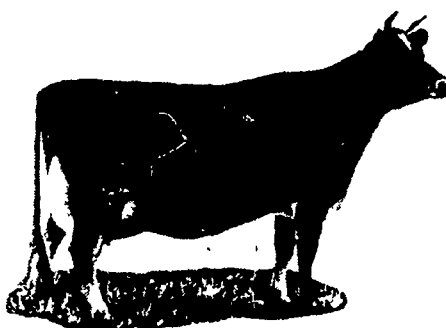


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