

Ag forum panel presents 'grassroots' challenges

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Three prominent farmers and a University of Maryland research farm supervisor presented their own lists of "Challenges and Opportunities" during the statewide Agricultural Leaders Forum held recently on the College Park campus.

The "grassroots" afternoon panel discussion followed a morning program of challenges and opportunities presented by six University of Maryland agricultural representatives and a food trade association official. Panel moderator was Larry E. Stewart, agricultural engineering department chairman in the College of Agriculture.

Farmer members on the panel were Donald E. Lippy of Hampstead, a Carroll County grain producer and former vice president of the Maryland Grain Producers Association; W. Simpson Dunahoo of Hebron, a Wicomico County broiler grower and former president of the Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.; Leon B. Enfield of Knoxville, a Frederick County dairy farmer and president of the Maryland Farm Bureau. Lippy and Enfield are also members of the Maryland Agricultural Commission.

The fourth panel member was Franklin D. Schales of Salisbury, coordinator-supervisor for the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station's vegetable research farm on the lower Eastern Shore. An associate professor of horticulture, Schales is also executive vice president of the Mid-Atlantic Food Processors Association and executive secretary of the National Agricultural Plastics Association.

Field Crops

Lippy's list of problems facing farmers included triazine-resistant weeds, common corn-stalk borer, European corn borer,

pesticide container disposal, and constantly rising prices for land rent and farm chemicals.

He declared there is a need for granular herbicides which can become active without a post-application rainfall requirement. His "needs" list also included a method for planting row crops without disturbing the soil.

Agriculture should have been public relations, Lippy said, and a system of land-use planning that will maintain enough farmland to maintain a viable agricultural economy.

Regarding new opportunities available for farmers, Lippy cited recent research work by the University of Maryland which combined fungicide and nitrogen applications to produce wheat yields of more than 100 bushels per acre. This development might make wheat worth growing in Maryland, he commented.

Lippy also made reference to microcomputers and the management opportunities they present for U.S. farmers to help feed the world, rather than having food used as a weapon to control the world.

Poultry

Dunahoo noted that Maryland accounts for 59 percent of the broilers produced in the three-state Delmarva area. And he reported that 4,000 individuals and organizations are currently members of Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc., a trade association based at Georgetown, Del.

The biggest challenge to the broiler industry recently has been just to stay in business, the former DPI president noted wryly. His list of challenges included better rail and truck transportation in the Delmarva area, lower interest rates, and unfair subsidies to farmers in most nations of the European Economic Community which make U.S. exports to that

area of the world virtually impossible.

The animal rights movement now gaining momentum in the United States also deals with confinement production of poultry and eggs, Dunahoo declared, and farmers need to be concerned about misleading charges being leveled against them.

Dairy & Livestock

Enfield agreed with Lippy that land use and preservation is a major problem facing farmers. On the animal rights issue, he declared that modern confinement systems for livestock and poultry are generally much more sanitary than old-fashioned open systems.

He questioned whether better distribution might not solve some of the transportation problems of U.S. agriculture. He cited Midwest butter being shipped to Maryland when the same manufacturer already has a major plant in this state.

Without better marketing channels, farmers can easily over-produce themselves into low

prices, Enfield declared. "You can't tell cows to produce less milk."

Loss of local slaughterhouses has hurt the Maryland livestock industry, the Farm Bureau leader commented. "We're losing consumption in the beef area. Livestock and other commodity groups need vigorous check-off programs like we already have in the dairy industry. Let's put more milk in vending machines and increase consumption."

Horticulture Crops

Complacency is a big danger for commercial producers of horticultural crops, warned Schales. It can allow energy costs to wipe out profits, effective chemicals to be lost due to registration cancellation, and labor regulations by government agencies to get out of hand.

Processors, growers and agricultural research workers need to work together for extended pack seasons, increased product recovery, better yields and improved varieties. Similar

cooperation can help to fine-tune grower production techniques in such areas as mineral nutrition, seeding techniques, planting density, growth regulators and reduced or no-tillage.

These goals can best be achieved through continuation of strong programs in research, teaching and extension at land-grant institutions like the University of Maryland, Schales concluded.

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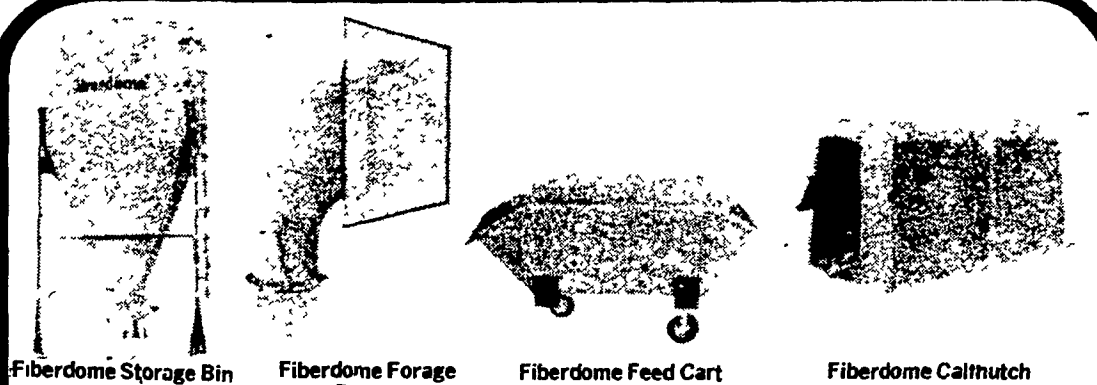
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