

'Mr. Agribusiness' looks back and ahead



"We must recognize the animal welfare issue."

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

(Don Parke, executive vice president, of PennAg Industries, an association of 525 agribusiness firms in the Commonwealth, attended his last Farm Show in his official capacity this week. After being intimately involved in the growth of agribusiness and thereby also farming in Pennsylvania for nearly a quarter of a century, he will retire on July 1. Following are some of his recollections, thoughts, hopes and warnings at this time when agriculture and agribusiness were in the state spotlight.)

EPHRATA — From his office in downtown Ephrata — one of Lancaster County's towns of contrasts— Donald W. Parke soon will leave his post as one of the state's leading spokesmen for Pennsylvania's agribusiness with the same optimism and professional enthusiasm he had when he first walked in the PennAg door some 23 years ago.

Glancing out of the window, he can still see clattering buggies pulling into a nearby feed mill to pick up supplies as they have for countless decades.

And dotting the nearby horizon are the conical spires of on-farm feed mixing facilities beginning to rival their commercial counterparts in size.

On some nearby farms, chickens still scratch in the barnyard. And on others are the low sprawling confinement structures.

In such agricultural and agribusiness contrasts as these are intermingled his optimistic views of the future, whose path is red-peppered with a flashing warning light or two.

"I'm very optimistic about the future of agriculture and agribusiness in Pennsylvania," he states with a conviction in his voice that matches the unwavering look in his eyes.

"Sure we're getting some complaints about current economic conditions, but you'd be surprised at the number of people that are doing relatively well.

"The key for agribusiness now is keeping on top of accounts receivable.

"We have this broad base of agricultural suppliers here in Pennsylvania. Everyone benefits from this competitive situation, both the farmers and agribusiness, who are recipients of supplies.

"The more markets there are, the better it is for agriculture as a whole."

After an entire professional lifetime in trade association work, he can provide a perspective view of the present economic conditions.

"Today, we seem to be having a more fundamental correction in the economy," he said.

"In past downturns, the government stepped in and provided only a temporary

solution. This seems to be a more permanent and lasting correction.

"It seems more serious, but in the long run I believe it will be better for everyone.

"But it's going to take a lot of courage to withstand the present storm.

"We have this tremendous technological base in agribusiness and agriculture, which has been attained through continuing research.

"We must not give up this base of expertise, which makes us better than anyone else.

"We must continue to support good research, which has a favorable effect on not only our economy, but on other things like world peace."

Terming it a near-term challenge, like a blinking warning light on the first bend in the road to the future, Parke points to animal welfare as a key coming issue.

"Many people may not recognize it as such but I think it's of immediate importance.

"Pennsylvania is largely an animal-based agriculture and the trend will continue to involve confinement housing.

"We need an all-out educational effort directed at that segment of the population that is not committed.

"You're not going to change the minds of the animal welfarists. They showed their real colors in their media campaign concerning veal.

"They talk of accommodation but at the same time declare outright war.

"We must talk with the uncommitted and show them the reason for current husbandry practices and how they ultimately



"Water will be agriculture's long-term challenge."

benefit every consumer."

And what about the biggest challenge that lies around a bend farther down the road?

"Water ultimately will be the most major longterm challenge for everyone in agriculture," he said.

"We must make certain that agriculture continues to have its vital share of water in the future, "Everything depends on it."

Nearly a quarter century ago when Parke joined PennAg, there were 430 members. Today, there are 525, primarily in seed, feed and ag chemical areas.

"That's pretty remarkable when you consider the consolidation that has taken place in agribusiness," he explained.

He points to the small computer as likely the salvation of

agribusiness members of the association.

"These computers can give agribusinesspeople more and better information when they need it," he said.

"Thus, we can anticipate instead of just reacting as before."

If you could divide Parke and the PennAg staff of nine in three equal parts, it would come out one-third spokesperson, one-third watchdog and one-third information funneler.

"We're like an upsidedown funnel," he explained, "gathering information at the small end and funneling it out through the large end to members or others where it's needed.

"Also, we must get that small end of the funnel in the right place, too.

"Concerning legislation and regulations affecting agribusiness members, we get involved when such things are being formulated."

As it has been for 22 previous years, this Farm Show was a hectic one for Parke. It was the customary round of various organizational meetings, getting together with other ag leaders and touching bases with many members who have exhibits.

Perhaps next year, it will be a more casual spectator-type show for him when he can get a beef sandwich or pork barbecue from the Livestock Association stand and munch it more leisurely.

After all, it was during his tenure as president of the Pennsylvania Livestock Association that the popular food booth was launched.

But even between now and his July 1 retirement, the busy pace will continue.



"I'm very optimistic about the future."

As president of the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations, he'll be presiding over the new format "Keystone Cornucopia" annual meeting planned at the Penn Harris Motor Inn on January 25.

"The business of determining overall ag policies this year will be formulated amidst a smorgasbord display of the broad spectrum of farm commodities that come from Pennsylvania," he said.

"I'd encourage members of the farm community to attend."

And after July 1. Parke's hands will be busy in his long-delayed avocation of restoring old homes.

But it's a good bet his heart and mind will still be closely tied to agriculture and agribusiness in Pennsylvania.

Agway grants total \$30,000

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Thirteen dairy, one swine, and one general livestock research projects at ten Northeastern universities are supported by Agway financial grants-in-aid during 1981-82.

Checks totaling \$30,000 for 11 new and four continuing investigations were presented to university researchers at the Agway College Dairy Conference. This conference is sponsored by Agway R&D to bring university researchers together with industry and agricultural experts to discuss

current trends and research findings in the dairy business.

The 15 studies involve nutrition and management areas of major concern to the dairy and livestock industry.

In dairy, five projects on protein nutrition are supported with grants of \$10,000. Three studies involving feeder behavior received \$5,000. Two grants totaling \$3,500 support research on light environment and minerals, and \$7,000 is provided for three studies on rumen function.

One general livestock and one

swine project are funded with \$4,500.

Universities conducting Agway supported dairy and livestock research include Cornell University, University of Maryland, University of Maine, University of Massachusetts, University of New Hampshire, Penn State University, Rutgers University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Vermont, and West Virginia University.

Faculty recipients included William Chalupa, University of Pennsylvania; Donald Ace, Penn State; and Richard Erdman, Maryland.

Bohacek joins Sire Power

TUNKHANNOCK — Peter Bohacek, Westminster, Md., is the new Direct Herd Representative for Sire Power, Inc., serving Western Maryland, Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia, and Northeastern Virginia.

Bohacek's duties will include direct herd semen sales, delivery of semen, supplies, and nitrogen direct to the farm, teaching A.I. Training Schools, supervising A.I. Technicians, and promotion of the Young Sire Sampling Program.

Bohacek served as a technician for Atlantic Breeders Co-op for the past three years. He has also worked on a registered Holstein farm in New York.

Bohacek graduated from Gloversville High School in New York and attended the West Virginia University where he studied math and agriculture education.

Peter and his wife, Gloria, and daughter, Julie, will continue to reside in Westminster, Maryland.



Peter Bohacek

Combine book available

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — "How to Choose the Right Combine to Match Your Needs" is described in new literature from the Agricultural Equipment Sector, Allis-Chalmers Corporation.

This booklet is designed to help the buyer in making vital decisions concerning the purchase of a combine. It compares various models within the Gleaner combine product line, both conventional and rotary. It also compares Gleaner combines to several major competitive models in similar size classes.

Highlights of the booklet include guidelines on how to compute daily/hourly harvest needs, how to figure harvest capacity, and how to identify bottlenecks. It also points out helpful hints on how to look at size-price relationships and aids in understanding conventional combines vs. rotary combines. Specs on the most popular con-

Beacon names Prout to post

LANCASTER — Sherwood W. Prout has joined Beacon Milling Company Inc., as poultry specialist in Pennsylvania.

Prout has had over 20 years experience in agribusiness, including 17 years as owner/developer of an egg processing distribution company.

Prout will be working closely with Olin Rowth, director of research and technical services for the Beacon Milling Company, Inc., in formulating feeds and assisting in the management of independent egg producers throughout Pennsylvania.

ventional and rotary combines are included to aid in the decision-making process.

For copies of "How to Choose the Right Combine to Match Your Needs," see an Allis-Chalmers dealer or write to Allis-Chalmers Corp., P.O. Box 512, Milwaukee, WI 53201, attention Merchandising Dept. Refer to form number 826-8110 when ordering.