

There will be enough fertilizer, but...

HERSHEY — There will be plenty of fertilizer for 1982, BUT...

This was the message brought to the Lime, Fertilizer and Pesticide Conference at the Hershey Convention Center on Wednesday by Ed Wheeler, president of the Fertilizer Institute.

And now to some of the buts:

—While there's plenty of fertilizer, there's no guarantee that enough is going to be at each dealer when farmers want it. Due to high interest rates and tight money, dealers are presently maintaining supplies only at about

50 percent of their storage capacities.

—When farmers go to buy their fertilizer, they're likely to encounter quite strict and tight credit policies.

—Application rates may be 10 to 15 percent higher than last year.

—And finally a large unknown on the immediate horizon is the effect of the deregulation of natural gas, which is expected from President Reagan about Feb. 10. If deregulation is complete and not gradual, it could quadruple feedstock costs for nitrogen

production.

Concerning fertilizer prices, Wheeler explained he wasn't allowed to talk finances, but he couldn't see why there should be much change in dealer costs in the near future.

In other matters during the initial day of the two-day conference, Frank Barner, retired member of the Penn State agronomy staff, was honored as the Pennsylvania Lime, Fertilizer and Pesticide Society's "Man of the Year" at Wednesday night's banquet.

In the election of new officers, Robert Tetrault, of the Penn State Entomology Department, was named president; and George Holton, of Mobay Chemical Company, vice president.

Outgoing president is Dean Nelson, of Stauffer Chemical Company.

Wheeler, head of the fertilizer industry's lobbying group in Washington and the "Henny Youngman" of the agribusiness speaking circuit, kept the combined audience of academic and industry members, on the edges of their seats with a talk laced with a combination of humorous one-liners and state-of-the-industry information.

"It's going to be a tough time for agriculture in 1982," he said, "and the American farmer is in one heck of a jam."

"But in the long pull, some of you young farmers out there eventually will begin to show some profit."

"Last year, farmers had about \$20 billion in ag income and spent half of that on fertilizer."

"We can't expect that two to one ratio to continue though."



In charge of program arrangements for annual Lime, Fertilizer and Pesticide Conference are Winand Hock, left, Penn State Extension pesticides specialist; and William Angstadt, vice president, Reading Bone Fertilizer Co.



Ed Wheeler, president of The Fertilizer Institute, addresses Lime, Fertilizer and Pesticide Conference.

Wheeler said that he expects U.S. ag secretary John Block to announce a 10 to 15 percent acreage cutback in the next couple of weeks.

But history has shown, Wheeler continued, that even when there are acreage cutbacks that farmers use just as much fertilizer.

The Fertilizer Institute head predicted that nitrogen use would be down only two or three percent

from the record 1981 year. But phosphate and potash use will continue to be flat, much as it has been for the past 36 months.

Wheeler cautioned dealers about extending credit for fertilizer purchases, if they want to stay in business. He told them to take a look at application costs, which have risen 10 to 15 percent in the past year.

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York slates

YORK — The board of the County Holstein Association announced tentative schedule of events through 1982.

"We invite all dairymen to attend these activities," encouraged Doug Cope, president of the county's black and white organization.

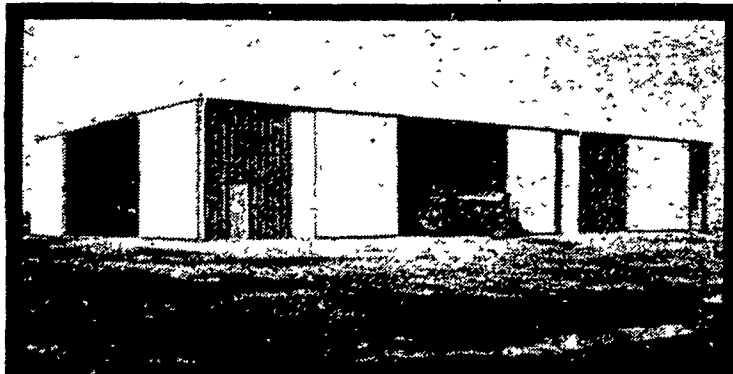
Kicking off the year-long is the spring barn meeting, Tuesday, March 9. Hosts are Theresa Stein, who has 100 cows in a newly-built comfort barn east of York.

One of the highlights of the schedule is the Calfarama Sale sponsored with Adams County. Avalong Farms will again have that evening sale, March 11.



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