

Lancaster Farming

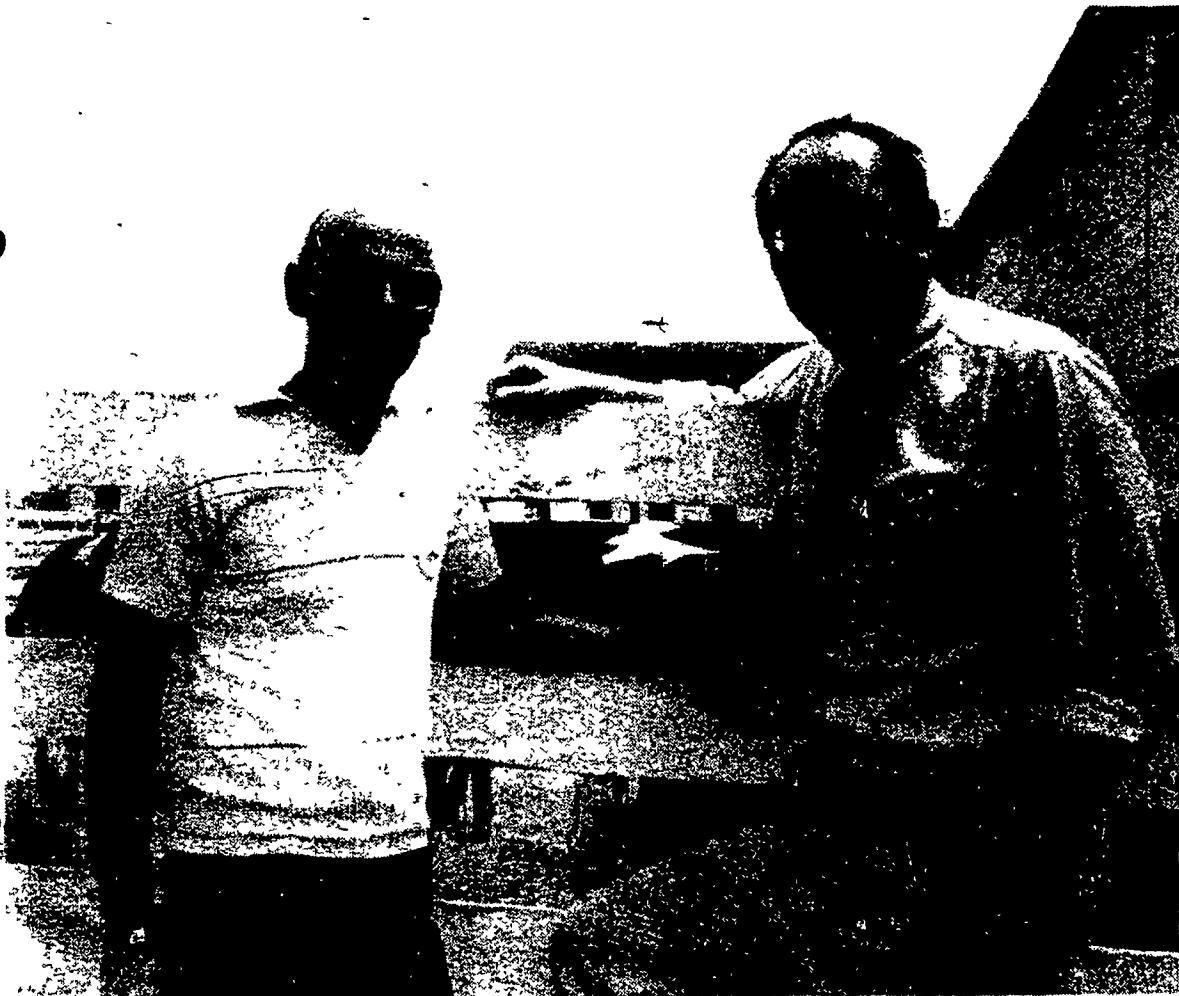
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\$7.50 per year

Farmers endorse Thornburgh



Dairyman Charles Benner, left, of Mount Pleasant Mills, Snyder County serves as co-chairman of the Farmers for Thornburgh-Scranton committee. More than 50 farmers

gathered at the Robert Kauffman farm near Elizabethtown on Thursday afternoon to announce their endorsement.

BY SHEILA MILLER
ELIZABETHTOWN — "What's that button you're wearing?"

Answering that question, dairyman Charles Benner of Mount Pleasant Mills, Snyder County, proudly stuck out his chest to permit a better view of a bright yellow tractor with farmer on board, surrounded by the words "Farmers for Thornburgh."

Benner, who co-chairs the Farmers for Thornburgh-Scranton committee, wasn't the only one wearing the eye-catching pin on Thursday afternoon. At least 50 other farmers were sporting these political buttons as they shared stories about the crops, cows, and other topics while waiting for the governor to make his appearance at Bob and Mim Kauffman's farm.

The Kauffmans, renowned throughout Lancaster County and the state for their top-of-the-line Holsteins, hosted the committee's first public press conference at their 220-acre farm. According to Mim, this is the first time a governor has visited their farm during the 20 years they lived there.

When asked if she did anything special to prepare for the governor's arrival, Mim said, "We swept up a little more than usual and we got the lawn mowed earlier." The little extras that require special efforts on a farm where spare time is the exception

and not the rule were all for a man the Kauffmans say is "doing a good job" for farmers.

On schedule, the governor's car rolled dustily down the graveled road leading to the Kauffmans' immaculate homestead. After a few words with the assembled farmers, the usual handshakes, and a wolfed-down sandwich, Thornburgh was ready to meet the press, taking his position next to dairyman Benner. The two men and other key supporters posed in front of a white-washed wooden gate as young Holstein heifers curiously peeked around the boards while munching on a strategically placed bale of alfalfa hay.

Expressing the committee's sentiments, Benner said farmers are happy with the job Dick Thornburgh has been doing over the past four years. "We want to keep a man like this in Harrisburg," he stated.

Benner and his fellow farmers applauded Thornburgh's legislative efforts in preserving the family farm and his support of agriculture and agribusiness. The 30 farm bills that were signed into law during Thornburgh's four-year administration were offered as proof of this politician's concern for agriculture.

With an ear-to-ear smile, the governor accepted the farmers' (Turn to Page A18)

A & B trims salaries; Hatfield expanding

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
LANCASTER — The volatile, ever-changing meat packing industry in Pennsylvania shifted again in the past week or so with one company cutting wages to combat current economics and another proceeding with the final stages of expansion that will significantly increase its capacity.

In Allentown, the A and B Meat Packing Company put into effect an approximate 15 percent cut in wages, which will continue during the remainder of the year.

And, Hatfield Packing Company, which is a full-line packer and manufactures meat products, expects to complete expansion of its cut floor and kill floor in the fall, bringing slaughter capacity to 3500-4000 hogs a day.

The A and B wage cut went into effect on June 27, following approval by employees belonging to the Meat Packers and Teamsters unions at the company.

The decision to trim wages, which amounts to a \$1.50 an hour cut for the union employees, is due to the present status of the economy, according to Lorin Hoffman, executive vice president of A and B.

The reduction cuts the unionized base rate from \$9.57 to \$8.07 an hour.

"By tightening up during these

harder times, we plan to come back in the better times," Hoffman said.

The A and B wage cut program includes plans for reinstating the original wage level on January 1 and then repaying the lost income to employees, plus interest, over an 18-month period.

The lost wages, plus 10 percent interest, are to be repaid to employees in three installments six months apart in June and December, 1983, and January, 1984.

Hoffman also reports that the customary seasonal summer dropoff in pork demand from the New York market is greater than normal this year, causing a larger than usual reduction in the A and B slaughtering schedule recently.

As a slaughtering firm, A and B primarily provides dressed hog carcasses to the New York area.

"In the past, our summer slaughter had dropped off to about 2600 to 2700 head a day," Hoffman said.

"Now, we're ranging from 2000 to 2500 a day."

During the fall and winter, A and B had been processing up to 3500 hogs a day.

"The New York market is tighter," he explained.

"There has been reaction to the

higher hog prices and their effect on retail levels and they tell us that the cut-outs just aren't good at this time."

At Hatfield Packing Company, the present slaughter schedule numbers 2250 to 2300 hogs a day, which is about 5 or 6 percent above last year, according to Jerry Clemens, of the buying department.

"The expansion of the cut floor and the kill floor, which is due to be completed in September or Oc-

tober, will increase our capacity to 3500 to 4000 a day," Clemens said.

"We won't be going to that number right away. It all depends on the economy and how the products are selling at that time."

Growth at Hatfield has been averaging about 10 to 12 percent a year, according to Clemens.

Last year, the overall state meat packing situation changed considerably with the cessation of operations by Penn Packing of Philadelphia, which had been

processing some 5500 to 6000 hogs a day.

In the interim, Porkland Industries, Inc., of Riverside, N.J., opened a hog slaughtering facility in the Ezra Martin facilities along the Old Philadelphia Pike in Lancaster.

The slaughter is averaging about 1200 head a day, according to Tony Bonaccorso, plant manager.

The carcasses are then shipped to the Porkland fabricating plant in Riverside, N.J.

Conestoga cleanup moves ahead

LANCASTER — After the first year of sign-ups by farmers in the northeastern section of Lancaster County, the federally funded, cost sharing program for the cleanup of the headwaters of the Conestoga River is moving head about on schedule.

Thus far, \$175,000 in federal funds have been committed out of the total \$1.4 million in federal funds available for water quality improvement contracts.

"This means that about 12 percent of the funds available for actual contracts have been committed in the first year of the 10-year project," Ray Brubaker, of the Lancaster Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Office, said.

"That would put us just about on

schedule over the full term of the project."

To date, 18 water quality plans have been developed and approved by the county committee for contracts on a cost-sharing basis.

Of these plans, the first year of eight contracts have been paid.

Thus far, a total of 48 applications are on file at the ASCS Office to participate in the program.

Based on the average cost of approved plans during the first year of the program, it would appear that approximately 150 farms can be added in the project to install improved management practices to reduce agricultural pollution in the Upper Conestoga.

With a total of \$175,000 committed during the first year to the

18 approved plans, the average federal share per farm is running about \$9,700. Thus, some 150 farms can be included in the project with total federal contract funds of \$1,448,000 available.

Some 400 farms are included in the critical areas of the project. Critical areas have been defined as those near small tributaries, those with animal density of more than 1.5 units per acre and farms using high rates of commercial nutrients or pesticides.

Federal cost-sharing funds are designed to cover 50 to 75 percent of the cost of installing improved pollution control practices and facilities, with a maximum limit of \$50,000 per farm over the 10-year life span of the project.