

Panel discusses starting cattle on feed

LANCASTER — A veterinarian, two cattle feeders, and a cattle jockey tossed out their philosophies on the best methods for starting cattle on feed Tuesday during the Lancaster Cattle Feeders' Day, sponsored by the Penn State Extension Service.

Dr. George Zimmerman of Ephrata described how shipped cattle could be suffering from stress, and viral and bacteria infections. He suggested cattle feeders strive to "get hay into those calves" quickly, and vaccinate them only if the calves don't appear to be sick already. He stressed the need to provide adequate housing, clean bedding and fresh water.

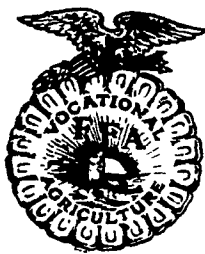
Lancaster County cattle feeder Earl Martin advocated medicating the drinking water, followed by medicated feed during the initial 2-4 weeks on the farm. Fellow cattle

feeder Ken Rohrer stressed the benefits of clean pens, water troughs, and feed bunks filled with hay. Rohrer added that it is important to watch the cattle being unloaded so that any lame or injured animals can be picked out of the bunch. This individual calf inspection should continue for the next several days, said Rohrer, so that sick animals can be detected early.

Jimmy Hoar of Kreider Cattle Company emphasized the need for cattle feeders to be sure their new purchases were properly weaned before being trucked to the farm. He also noted that regular bedding and a bit of exercise do wonders for the cattle.

Up in smoke

If you smoke a pack and a half of cigarettes a day, you spend about \$370 a year; two packs, almost \$500.



WASHINGTON, D.C. — Farmers who take part in the payment-in-kind program can get higher yield guarantees on crop losses insured by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

In announcing the new initiative Tuesday, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said increased yield guarantees can run as high as 10 percent for farmers who participate in PIK at the 30 percent level. Yield guarantees will go up less for lower levels of participation.

"To qualify for the yield guarantee increase, the insured farmer must participate in the PIK program at least at the 10 percent level," said Block. "That would make the farmer eligible for an increase of 6 percent."

Block said the guaranteed increase will climb to 8 percent at the 20 percent participation level. The 10 percent increase for PIK participation at the 30 percent level will be the maximum allowed.

Under the PIK program announced Jan. 11, farmers can allow some of the land they normally farm to lie idle. In return, they will

get a certain amount of the commodity they would have raised from reserves held by the government.

The objective of PIK, said Block, is to balance demands and supplies by reducing production, cutting surplus stocks and avoiding price support payments.

Merritt W. Sprague, manager of the USDA crop insurance corporation, said he believes the new insurance offer is an incentive that will attract new producers to crop insurance and encourage those already insured to continue their coverage.

"No additional action will be required by the insured farmer who is a PIK program participant to qualify for the increased yield guarantee," said Sprague. "No additional premium will be charged for added coverage."

In the event of loss, said Sprague, the producers' policy guarantees will be adjusted according to his verified PIK participation records.

Sprague said the yield guarantee increase level is based on the corporations' expectation of increased yields, more timely operations and greater inputs per

acre on the remaining acreage of PIK participants. The agency can offer higher guarantees without a corresponding rise in premium rates because it estimates the risk of loss will be reduced.

Current winter wheat policy holders who are participating in PIK may submit revised acreage reports to the corporation until March 11, said Sprague. No premium will be due on destroyed acreage for reports filed on time.

Producers submitting bids for whole farm participation may submit a zero acreage report which is conditional upon acceptance of their bid by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Soon, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation will send notification letters to insured producers outlining alternatives and procedures to follow.

More information about the PIK program and federal crop insurance participation can be obtained by calling a toll-free number, (800) 388-5942 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Producers also may get full details from local offices of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Preconditioned calf

(Continued from Page A24)

yearling feeder cattle, Burdette said farmers don't have to be as cautious. He suggested feeding good hay, 3-4 pounds of grain, and silage without NPN for at least the first week. He noted that yearlings should be on full feed within 15-20 days.

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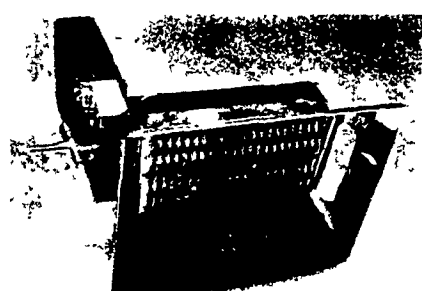
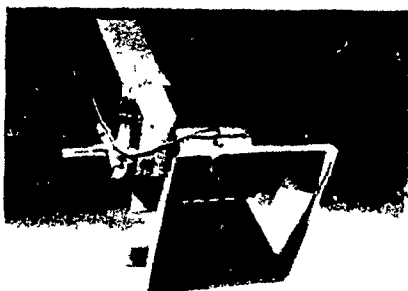
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