

The Milk Check

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County Agent



Now What

Keeping the 50 cents in your milk check may be a small consolation for the adjustments you may have to make this year. Right now no one knows what lies ahead and the uncertainty is what can drive you up the wall even worse than taking 50 cent cut if you could have been sure that that would have been the end of your problem.

The lame duck session of Congress didn't have time to consider new dairy price support legislation. One of the things it did pass was a five cent increase in the gas tax and increases in license fees to save the interstate highway system and create some jobs. You may not think that has anything to do with milk marketing but consider who hauls your milk from farm to market.

Hauling farm products (including milk) is not regulated (at least as far as setting rates) in interstate commerce so it becomes the principal business of independent haulers rather than the larger freight moving companies.

With the independent haulers threatening strike the end of January because of the tax and fees increases there may be a lot of

milk left in bulk tanks at the farm. Everyone hopes it won't happen but the memory of the last haulers strike is still fresh in the minds of northeastern Pennsylvania farmers and they're worried.

Congress Convenes

About the same time the truckers threaten to strike, Congress returns for its next session. They're aware of what they provided for dairy price supports in the last session and what has happened since, including the law suits. They generally felt that they were being considerate and even generous in what they provided in the last session in view of a lack of unity in the dairy industry.

Now they're being blamed for all the problems and being asked to come up with a new solution. Unless there's more consensus this time in the industry than there was last year, I'm afraid the cost will be higher than 50 cents.

DHIA contributes to Ag Arena



The Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association, in memory of the late Dexter N. Putnam, retired Extension dairy specialist, contributed \$6,194 to the Penn State Ag Arena Fund last week at the organization's board meeting on the University Park Campus. From left: Oliver Butler of R7, Wellsboro, DHIA president; Mrs. Putnam of State College; Samuel Smith, dean of the College of Agriculture; and Phillip Dukas, director of the Penn State DHIA program. The contribution represents one dollar for every herd enrolled in the program. Contributions to the fund currently total \$650,000 of the \$900,000 goal. The facility will be used for student activities and statewide shows and sales.

Md. scientists develop alternative to surgical boar castration

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — University of Maryland animal scientists believe they have found a stress-free alternative to surgical castration of young boar pigs raised for pork production.

A large daily dose of synthetic hormone - called an LHRH - blocks the production of the male hormone testosterone and decreases levels of another substance - the

steroid androstenone - in the blood stream of mature boar pigs, according to the scientists.

The presence of androstenone in the body fat of boars causes their cooked meat to take on an unpleasant smell and taste, called "boar taint," according to scientists Douglas Greger, W. Ray Stricklin and Monica Haaland of the University of Maryland.

To overcome that problem, pork producers commonly castrate boar pigs, Stricklin said.

In addition to reducing stress to the animal and decreasing labor inputs by pork producers, Stricklin pointed out there are other advantages to using the LHRH agonist over castration.

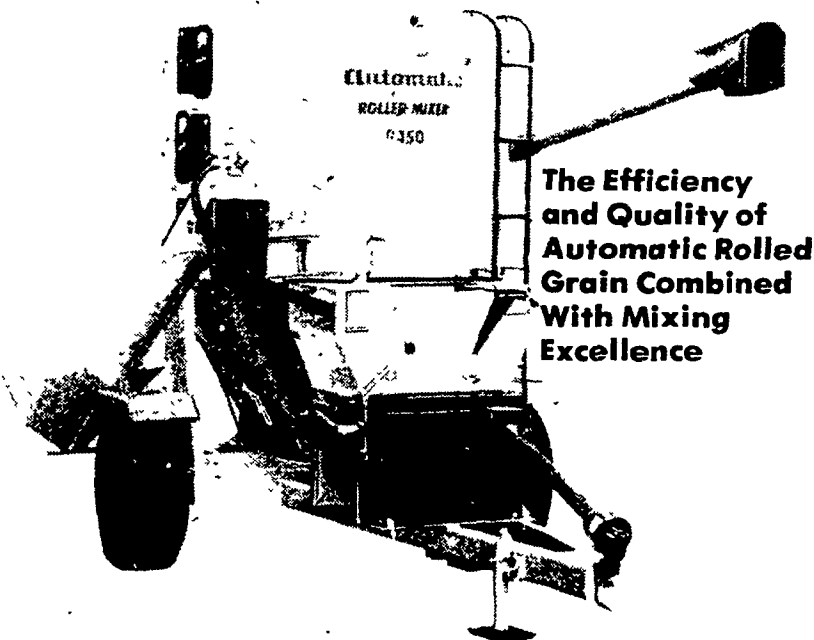
Uncastrated boars are leaner, gain weight faster and more ef-

ficiently than castrated pigs, called "barrows," according to Stricklin.

The hormone injection method, he said, requires additional testing to determine how it affects boar growth and the development of boar taint in meat before it can be adopted by pork producers as an alternative to surgical castration, Stricklin said.

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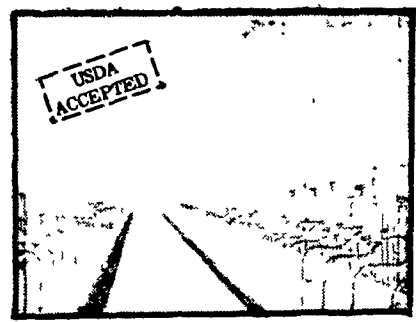
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