

BY LAURA ENGLAND

**TYRONE** — If you're looking for an efficient feeding and record program for your beef operation, or if you're interested in keeping abreast of current livestock legislation, then you'll want to meet one Huntingdon County cattleman who says he's willing to offer his help to keep the beef industry healthy.

Whether sponsoring a tour of his farm or meeting with cattlemen throughout the state, J. Paul Espy shares his farming "secrets" with others, hoping that his help will have a positive effect on the beef industry.

"I want to see the industry kept healthy," Espy confirms, "and I'm willing to offer my help."

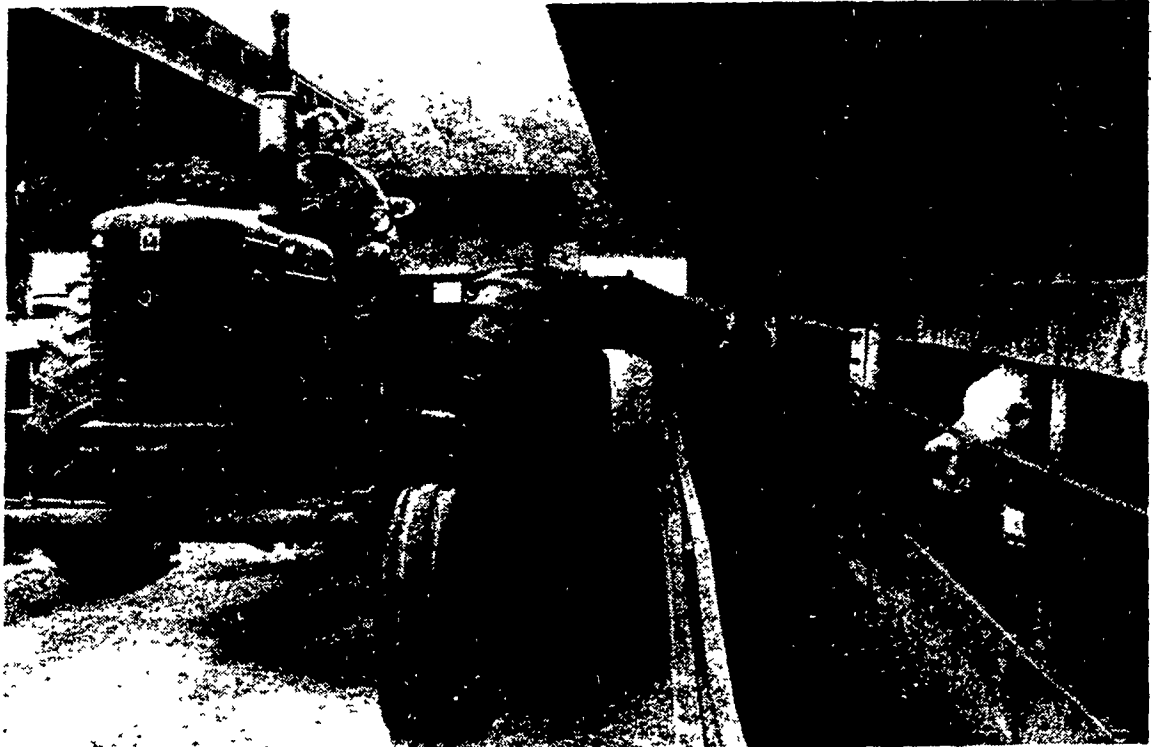
Espy, president of the Pennsylvania Beef Council, owns a 650-acre feeder cattle operation in the Spruce Creek Valley near Tyrone. Starting his business in 1972, Espy

has increased his yearling marketing quota from 400 to 1000 cattle.

Espy credits his record-keeping system, considered by many as one of the best in the state, for his success. Through his records, Espy says he knows where and where not to buy cattle. This is accomplished by comparing the records of individual cattle.

"Determining the performance of different breeds of cattle, their frame size and their origin," Espy says, "are the most important reasons why I keep an up-to-date record system."

When the cattle are bought, they are immediately recorded in the books. Espy records their ear tag number, the date purchased, the cattle breed, their origin, the cattle's weight when purchased, full feed, the cattle's weight when sold, and the selling date. Also



With the help of Bill Showalter, the current 700 cattle on Paul Espy's Greenridge Farm are fed a total mixed ration twice daily. The feed is mixed in a mixing wagon equipped with an electronic scales for an accurate measure of the feed and feedstuffs.



J. Paul Espy, president of the Pennsylvania Beef Council, is concerned with the marketing and promotion of Pennsylvania beef, saying if cattle aren't marketed, there won't be much beef production in the state in 10 years.

recorded is the rate of gain per day.

By watching the rate of daily gain, Espy determines when an animal should be sold.

"The cattle are weighed every three weeks," he says, "and once the rate of gain drops below two and a half pounds from the previous weight, I think about selling them."

Currently, the cattle on Espy's Greenridge Farm are averaging a daily rate gain of two and three-fourths pounds per head. This gain is maintained through a total mixed ration consisting of corn silage, high moisture corn, shelled corn, alfalfa haylage and minerals.

Espy buys his cattle, weighing between 600 to 800 pounds, and feeds them to approximately 1200 pounds. Newly purchased cattle are kept in a starting pen and fed a ration similar to what they are used to.

A growing ration is fed to the cattle for about three weeks. The ration is 25 percent ground shelled corn, 60 percent corn silage and 15 percent alfalfa haylage. Mixed in are minerals and Bovatec, a substance that enables cattle to get more out of the feed as it goes through the stomach, Espy explains.

When the cattle reach 900



A growing ration, as similar as possible to what the animals are used to, is fed to the new cattle which are kept in a starting pen. The ration is fed for two to three weeks.

pounds, they are switched to a finishing ration consisting of 30 percent shelled corn, 20 percent high moisture ground corn, 42 percent corn silage and eight percent alfalfa haylage. Minerals and Bovatec are again added.

The feed is mixed in a mixing wagon equipped with electronic scales, Espy explains, and the cattle are fed from a bunk. With the scales, the feed is measured and the proper proportions are determined. A chart is placed on the front of the wagon, listing the requirements for both the growing and finishing rations.

Espy grows all his own feed and says he got a 20 percent increase in production from his crops last year. He attributes this to his

manure handling procedures. The manure is removed from the feedlots twice a week and is stored in an in-ground pit. The manure is then hauled out and injected into the soil.

"This method (injecting manure into the soil) helps to minimize run-off," Espy says, "and maintains a majority of the nitrogen."

Recently, Espy sponsored a tour of his farm and demonstrated the manure injecting method and answered cattlemen's questions concerning his operation. This is one way in which Espy strives to help improve the state's beef industry, by sharing his knowledge and opinions.

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Espy's feeding program consists of a total mixed ration of corn silage, high moisture corn, shelled corn, haylage and minerals. A growing ration of ground shelled corn, corn silage and alfalfa haylage is fed to the under 900 pounds cattle, and those over 900 pounds receive a finishing ration of shelled corn, high moisture ground corn, corn silage and haylage.



The manure storage system on Greenridge Farm is this in-ground manure pit. The manure is hauled out to the fields and injected into the soil, a method Espy says minimizes run-off and maintains a majority of the nitrogen.