

# Cautious optimism is ag byword for 1984

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

**FARM SHOW** — No one likely gets to talk to more farmers in a few days time than the commercial exhibitors at the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

And walking through the commercial exhibit area is a lot like a flea when it first gets into a dog kennel.

You're literally surrounded by all sizes and shapes of things which you like to crawl over and get to know better. Like the flea, you don't know which to hop on first. The best approach seems to hop from one to the other, sampling what each has to offer.

And even if you're not in a

buying mood right at the moment, you can get a firsthand look at what's new and different.

The commercial exhibitors as they talk shop also are a good barometer of farmer feelings. After all, any ag salesman worth his weight in alfalfa not only is a seller but he's also the industry's finger on the pulse of the agricultural community.

And what was this finger finding at the Farm Show. Well, it was finding at least three different things:

First, the pulse of the ag community is still beating strong and steady, but the rhythm of the beat might best be characterized as one of cautious optimism.

Second, if any area dairy farmers are signing up for the DO milk diversion program, they hadn't emerged by Farm Show week.

And third, farmers — who would rather tackle a problem out in the shop than any video puzzle in the living room — haven't lost their interest and yen for mechanical ag innovation one bit, even though it may have been relatively dormant for the past couple of years.

Here's a sampling of comments from some of the exhibitors about their Farm Show contacts:

"We've found farmer attitudes just great. There's pent-up demand out there. Now, if the government will only quit confusing people with new programs. The greatest interest has been in our new pivot-tongue mower-conditioner and the slurry-type manure spreader, which can handle both solids and liquids." — Gary Mummau, Sperry New Holland.

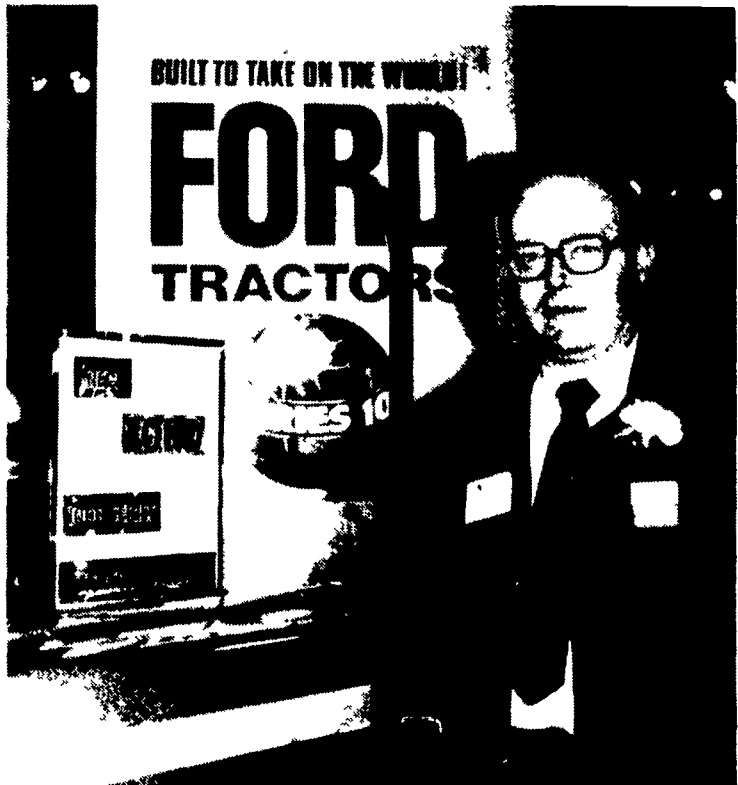
"I'd go along with cautious optimism for the coming year. Outlook depends on conditions that exist in a certain area. Where PIK payments have been heavier, as the Eastern Shore and Central Virginia, business is up. But you can't ignore things like the Avian flu. There's been good interest in our harvester with the cornhead that features Spout-Trak, which guarantees the crop goes into the wagon and builds an even load and Row-Trak, which keeps it on the corn row." — Gene Walker, of John Deere.

"There's been good interest and we've found that attitudes are significantly brighter in general. Our Model 782 Diesel Cadet Tractor has been getting a lot of play, along with the center-pivot mower-conditioner and the 50 series tractor. Planter intentions are picking up. Last year, no-till boosted planters and this year following PIK the interest is continuing." — Dennis Hann, International Harvester.

"In the last six months as the general economy has improved, we've noted similar improvement in the ag sector. People are upbeat, but the new milk diversion program has dairymen hesitating at the moment. We've had strong interest in two lines of tractors — the 1000 Series under 30 HP. and the TW Series, particularly in the 105 to 120 HP. range." — Larry Schnettler, Ford Tractor.

"Yes, there's cautious optimism. But I haven't talked to a dairy farmer yet who plans to participate in the milk diversion program. Their shippers simply need the milk. We've had a lot of interest in pre-owned equipment and the new Atlas unloader that fits the largest of our structures." — Frank Possesky, of Penn-Jersey Harvester.

"The outlook is better. People are optimistic but naturally a little cautious. But they've been putting off buying for some two years now. The smaller tractor — from 100 HP and down — is very popular in this area and we had our best planter sales in December." — Lloyd Fortna, Allis-Chalmers.



Larry Schnettler, of Ford Tractor, says new models — particularly 1000 Series — are getting a good reception.



Frank Possesky, right, of Penn-Jersey Harvester, talks with dairymen, Joe and Al Schertel, of R1 Barto.



Jon Fair, left, and Lloyd Fortna, of Allis-Chalmers, cite interest in tractors and planters.



Gary Mummau, of Sperry New Holland, center foreground, talks with Farm Show visitors. In background is company's pivot-tongue mower-conditioner.



Gene Walker, left, of John Deere, discusses Spout-Trak principle on harvester with Tim Mosebey, of Lost Creek Implement at Oakland Mills.



Dennis Hann, right, and Larry Clouse, of International Harvester, talk tractors to Steve Kauffman, of Parkesburg.