

# 10% equipment sales hike forecast

TUCSON, Ar. — Farm equipment manufacturers are expecting a 10 percent upturn in dollar volume sales during the coming year, following 1983 which has been described as the worst sales year in recent history.

With few exceptions, farm equipment sales hit new lows during the past year — frequently running less than half of the rate of sales experienced in 1979.

The equipment manufacturers are looking for a better year coming up due to higher cash receipts, unproved commodity prices and more acreage under cultivation.

The forecast was made in a survey taken late last month of the member companies of the Farm and Industrial Equipment Institute and reported this week at the annual winter session of the FIEI Marketing and Management Conference by John W. Snead, vice president of marketing, North American Division of Sperry New Holland.

Snead pointed out that on the heels of the worst sales year (1983) for farm equipment generally, FIEI member companies are expecting 1984 to be better. The sharp improvement in realized net farm income in 1983 is pinpointed as a prime factor in the Institute members' optimistic forecast. Other positive influences mentioned include moderate or declining interest rates, an-

icipation of normal weather patterns and a pent up demand.

The government's PIK program was cited as a major factor for the sales decline last year since it took more than 80 million acres out of production. Reduced exports, sluggish domestic demand and higher than anticipated interest rates were also listed as detrimental influences to farm equipment sales.

Highest growth rates are anticipated in 1984 for grain harvesting equipment and large tractors as a result of putting PIK acres back in production. Uncertain profitability for livestock, hog and dairy producers — particularly during the first half — restrains predictions of growth in hay and forage equipment in 1984.

**Tractors**  
All categories of tractors are expected to show sales increases this year, led by double-digit percentage increases in 2WD over 100 HP and 4WD tractors. The improved commodity market is credited for this improved outlook. Sales of 2WD tractors under 40HP are anticipated to continue the steady upward trend of the past five years, maintaining the significant share of total farm tractor sales.

**Grain harvesting**  
Members see the brightest 1984 outlook for the grain harvesting equipment, rebounding from PIK-induced 1983 lows. However, even

the additional increases forecast for 1985 will not bring unit sales up to 1981 levels. SP combines, after a low of less than 13,000 units of 1983 are expected to increase by 23.2% in 1984 to 17,250 units, with an 11.6% hike to 19,250 units for 1985.

**Tillage**  
Modest increases are anticipated in tillage equipment sales for 1984, ranging from 5.0% for moldboard plows to 10.0% for disk harrows and chisel plows. An 8.0% growth for field cultivators leads the 1985 outlook for the tillage group, with moldboard plows holding steady and disk harrows and chisel plows advancing 5.0% and 5.3%, respectively.

**Hay, forage**  
The outlook for hay and forage equipment is generally lower than for other products. Balers under 200 lbs. are expected to be down 2.0% for 1984 virtually the same for

1985. A brighter outlook is seen for balers over 200 lbs., with 1984 expected to show a 7.0% increase, and 8.0% in 1985.

Mower-conditioners are unique in the expectation of a 1983 increase over 1982, and respondents expect the direction to continue up: 2.1% in 1984, and 4.8% in 1985. In forage harvesters, survey respondents expect 1984 to show a 3.0% increase, with a 1985 gain of 5.8%. The 1984 sales of windrowers are pegged up 7.4% with 1985 up another 2.9%.

**Crop dryers**  
Crop dryer sales are expected to benefit from increased crop production and newer energy efficient models. In-bin crop dryers are forecast up 5.0% in 1984 and 6.0% in 1985. Batch and continuous flow crop dryers are seen expanding by 15.0% in 1984 and 10.0% for 1985.

**Elevators, bins**  
Also benefitting from increased amounts of grain to be handled, portable farm augers and elevators are estimated to be up 8.0% in 1984 and 5.0% in 1985. Grain bins could show 5.0% and 10.0% gains for 1984 and 1985, respectively.

**Dairy**  
Dairy program changes and continuing surpluses serve to limit the outlook for milking machines to a 2.5% growth in 1984, and a 5.0% growth in 1985.

**Farmstead**  
Citing mainly positive effects of the new dairy legislation and interest in computerized management systems, respondents forecast 5.0% increases for both 1984 and 1985 for dairy and beef mechanization equipment. Hog mechanization equipment is forecast up 4.0% for 1984 and 8.0% for 1985, as the picture brightens for hog profitability in late 1984 and into 1985.

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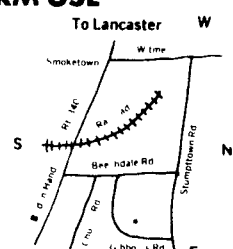
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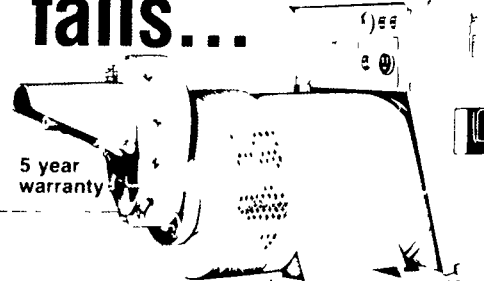
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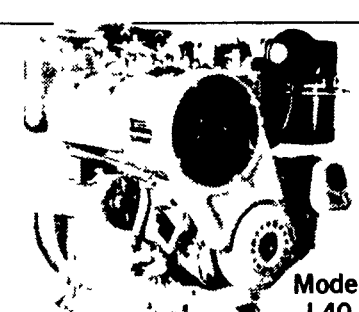
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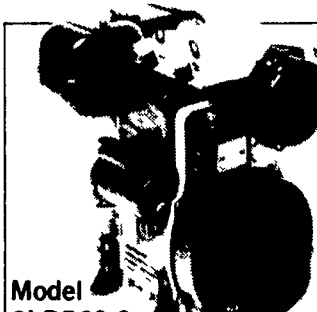
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