

Lancaster Farming

VOL. 29 No. 40 Four Sections Lancaster Farming, Saturday, August 4, 1984 \$7.50 per Year

Hog producers trying to form packer co-op

Would buy and operate A & B plant at Allentown

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
WERLEY'S CORNER — An effort was launched among hog producers in several parts of Pennsylvania this week to form a packer co-op to buy and operate the idled A. and B. Packing Plant at Allentown.

Spearheading the effort to enroll some 200 hog producers at \$1,000 each to get the program rolling is Henry Gruber, of R2 New Tripoli, hog producer, buyer for A and B and well-known livestock judge.

An initial meeting of hog producers was held Tuesday night at the Werley's Corner hotel of Sterling Zimmerman — another well-known buyer and trucker in the state's hog industry.

Gruber also made additional contacts among hog industry leaders and producers in Lebanon and York counties this week.

On Tuesday night a number of hog producers from the Lehigh and Berks county areas became the first farmers to purchase \$1,000 shares of common stock to provide the seed money in the effort to buy and take over the A and B plant.

The effort is aimed at enrolling a minimum of 200 hog producers at \$1,000 each to provide a \$200,000 fund to apply for low-interest state and federal loans to make an offer for the plant.

Gruber told the approximate 30 hog producers on Tuesday night it is hoped that arrangements can be completed to make the offer for purchase as soon as possible, hopefully during the coming week.

"If you want to stay in hog production," Gruber told the producers, "you must look over the horizon at the future of your industry."

"There's a real concern about maintaining packing plant capacity in Pennsylvania."

"The industry needs additional capacity and competition to make your hog product a viable commodity."

"We need this plant and others to make the hog business flourish in Pennsylvania."

"We don't want our business to have the problem facing beef in which there's essentially only one packer."

"But we need a sincere interest shown by hog farmers."

In addition to the initial \$200,000 goal to get the acquisition ball rolling, an overall amount of \$4 million to \$6 million would be needed to purchase the plant, make some renovations and establish a line of credit to begin operation.

Working with the hog producer group is the PACMA unit of the Pennsylvania Farmers Association to coordinate legal and loan efforts to apply for state and federal low-interest monies and a line of credit.

While PFA is assisting with the acquisition effort, the plant if purchased would be run entirely by participating hog farmers through a board of directors who would

(Turn to Page A37)



Signing pledges to form hog producer packer co-op are, seated from left, Sterling Zimmerman, Werley's Corner; Earl Wessner, R2 Kutztown; and Henry Gruber, R2 New Tripoli; standing from the left, Carl Wessner, R2 Kutztown; Harold Handwerk, R1 Kempton; Harry Gruber, R1 New Tripoli; Butch Wessner, Kempton; and Herman Dietrich, R2 Breinigsville.

In Seven Valleys, York County

1250-sow unit under construction

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
SEVEN VALLEYS — A 1,250-sow farrow-to-finish complex, believed to be the largest in Pennsylvania, is under construction in Seven Valleys, York County.

The operation, in which initial gilts and boars will be brought in late this month, will be marketing some 25,000 hogs a year when in full operation.

The complex will be managed by

Pennfield Corporation, which now has some 7500 sows in its system of major complexes with which it is associated, according to Ray Lehr, manager of the Feed Marketing Division.

The multi-million-dollar complex will contain two large buildings connected in an "off-set-H" format.

Under construction now is the first building measuring 490 feet long by 106 feet wide. It will con-

tain gestation, farrowing, pre-nursery and nursery facilities.

It is expected breeding operations will get under way about the end of August.

The second building will measure 594 feet long by 106 feet wide and contain grower-finishing facilities. It will be completed in time for the first hogs to be grown out and finished for market.

At any one time some 12,500 hogs

(Turn to Page A33)

Providing higher

Research

Production

Marketing

For Farming

AG PROGRESS

FARMERS: Mark your calendar for Aug. 21-23 to visit Penn State's outstanding agricultural extravaganza.

ADVERTISERS: Next Friday, Aug. 10, is the deadline to contact us to be included in the big Ag Progress Issue on Saturday, Aug. 18.

Pa. Food Products Month proclaimed

BY SUZANNE KEENE
HARRISBURG — At special ceremonies in Strawberry Square in Harrisburg Wednesday, State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell read Governor Thornburgh's proclamation designating August Pennsylvania Food Products Month.

Farmers, producers, processors, grocers and restaurateurs throughout the state are joining to pay tribute to Pennsylvania food products during August, the traditional time for peak harvest of fruits and vegetables in Pennsylvania.

Hallowell said Governor Thornburgh has set the month of August aside to recognize agriculture's contribution to the state's economy. Through events like the one at Strawberry Square, he said the governor hopes to make consumers realize the importance of having a strong agriculture in the state.

Hallowell noted that naming August Pennsylvania Food Products Month should help Pennsylvania products to be used to an even greater degree. "We

(Turn to Page A30)



Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell enjoys a fresh mushroom from 1984 Mushroom Queen Angela DeProspero at the kick-off ceremonies for Pennsylvania Food Products Month in Harrisburg.