

Lancaster Farming

VOL. 30 No. 17 Five Sections Lancaster Farming, Saturday, March 2, 1985 \$7.50 per Year

No-till means no run-off, says USDA's Myers

BY JACK HUBLEY
LANCASTER - The USDA's Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment came to Lancaster's Farm and Home Center on Tuesday to promote no-till systems, and offer insight into the administration's market-oriented approach to Farm Bill '85.

Speaking to 300 farmers at the Lancaster County Conservation District's fourth annual Conservation Tillage Conference, Peter Myers expressed confidence in the agricultural community's ability to manage soil and water.

"I think we can clean up our own house," said the former Soil Conservation Service chief, "but we're (farmers) only three percent of the population and some day we're going to have to answer to the rest of society," he cautioned.

And the surest way to solve the current soil erosion and nutrient run-off problems, according to Myers, is by adopting no-till systems.

"In my opinion, as a farmer, I think no-till fits into most farming operations," he said. "Economically, there's no doubt in my mind that when you lose soil

you lose dollars—right now."

And in a dry year, you're normally going to make a better crop," he pointed out, speaking from his own experience as a swine farmer in Missouri.

Alluding to the fact that no-till farming is not the sole answer to the water pollution problem, Myers emphasized that good herbicide management is crucial.

"I have very strong concerns about herbicide management," he said, noting that improper use and disposal of excess chemicals can have grave consequences for the environment. In his own state of Missouri, Myers said, farmers must first pass a test and obtain a license before purchasing any farm chemicals.

Pointing out that no-till farming, definitely cuts the cost of production," Myers added that, if he were a young farmer getting started today his equipment purchases would include a used tractor, a sprayer and a new no-till planter.

But even the most efficient production methods probably won't help those farmers carrying excessive debt loads, said Myers,

turning to a discussion of the farm bill.

Briefly outlining the current proposal, he said that the administration hopes to make the transition to a market-oriented ag economy within three years. To accomplish this, loan rates would drop to 75 percent of a commodity's price based on the average market value during the past three years.

To ease the impact of lower loan rates, the administration plans to reimburse farmers for the difference between the loan rates and the target price. For the first year of the program the target price would equal 100 percent of a commodity's value based on the same three-year average.

The target price would drop in succeeding years, lowering a farmer's deficiency payment. This pattern would continue until the target price reached the loan rate, whereupon farm income would be tied directly to market demand for products.

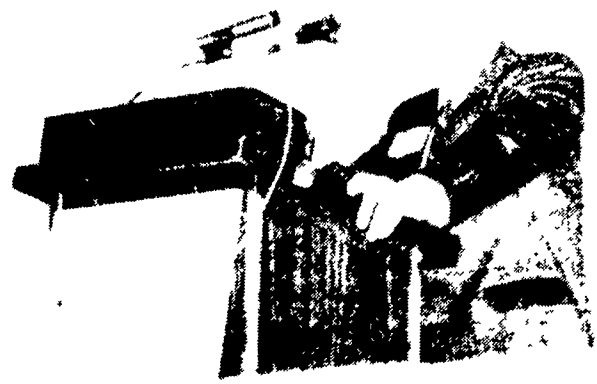
"The concept, I think, is sound," said Myers, "but my personal opinion is that the time period is

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Keynote speaker at the Lancaster County Conservation Tillage Conference on Tuesday was USDA Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Peter Myers, who urged farmers to put away their plows in favor of no-till systems.

Strong dollar hurts ag trade, CoreStates economist says



Corestates Financial Corp. economist A. Gilbert Heebner, talked about the value of the dollar and its impact on agricultural trade, during a speech to the Hamilton Bank Agri-Education Seminar this week at the Farm and Home Center.

BY JAMES H. EVERHART
LANCASTER - A brutally strong U.S. dollar has helped keep inflation down but has hurt our ability to export by making our prices too high, a CoreStates economist told about 300 farmers this week.

Thus, important sectors of our economy, including some manufacturing industries and agriculture, have not shared in the recent prosperity," CoreStates Executive Vice President A. Gilbert Heebner told the Hamilton

Bank Agri-Education Seminar at the Farm and Home Center.

At the same time that the strong currency makes our exporting prices too high, it makes foreign goods much less expensive. Thus, it stimulates low-priced foreign competition like Canadian pork or grain from South America and other competitors.

As a result, he concluded, in agricultural commodities, where we normally have a large surplus of exports over imports, the surplus dwindled from \$27 billion in

1981 to about \$18 billion in 1984.

Despite the adverse effects on the farm economy, there's no easy way to bring down the value of the dollar without stimulating increased inflation and higher interest rates, he said.

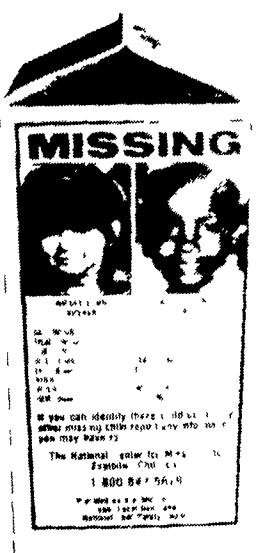
The result, then, is an increase in the "misery index" for farmers, which, he said, is the ratio of prices paid for feed and equipment, compared to the prices received for farm products.

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INSIDE this issue

Missing kids on milk cartons

Milk cartons featuring photos of missing children are appearing on supermarket shelves across the country. The cartons are part of a nationwide campaign to locate children who have been criminally abducted. For more on the milk cartons, see this week's family living section on page B16.



Pa., Md. Holstein

"Happenings"

Holstein breeders from across Pennsylvania and Maryland gathered last week for their annual state conventions.

For complete coverage of the PHA business meetings, awards breakfast, and banquet, turn inside to A28-29. News of the junior meetings can be found on B30.

Turn to A24 for a report on the Maryland Convention Sale and state Holstein award winners.



Two Holstein conventions were held last week - more inside.