

# Lancaster Farming

SEP 26 1985

VOL. 30 No. 46

Four Sections

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, September 21, 1985

\$7.50 per Year

## By the Board Foot!



Even in Lancaster County, where corn is traditionally "as high as an elephant's eye," Roy Erb's backyard corn plot is a real head turner.

Erb, of Brook Lawn Farm north of Lancaster, planted some novelty seed from Mexico around the first of May. To date, the stalks are an estimated 16 feet tall (the "yardstick" in the photo is a 12-footer) and still growing.

"I believe it'll go to 17 or 18 feet 'til it's done," he predicts. Would the veteran Lancaster County farmer want to harvest 100 acres of this skyscraping variety? "If it lays down I wouldn't want any part of it," he smiles.

## August milk production up 9.7% over 1984 output

BY JAMES H. EVERHART  
 WASHINGTON — U.S. milk production rose once again in August, surpassing year-earlier levels by an incredible 9.7 percent, USDA officials said.

The increase marks the sixth consecutive month in which production exceeded 1984 figures for the month. Moreover, the increases have grown larger each month, beginning with a 12 percent increase in March.

Production in August was 12.291 billion pounds, up from the 11.206 billion recorded in August 1983. The figure was, however, about 100 million pounds less than the record-high production levels achieved in June and July.

Cow numbers continued their steady increase, jumping 33,000 from month-earlier levels, to 11.1 million. Production per cow jumped 6.8 percent, to 1,107 pounds.

In Pennsylvania, milk production went up eight percent, to 847 million pounds, while New York recorded a seven-percent increase in August.

Much larger increases were noted in the other top five milk-producing states, according to USDA figures. Minnesota led the majors with a 16 percent increase over 1984 totals, while Wisconsin reported a 13-percent hike and California, an eight-percent increase.

Among the other states,

Florida's dairymen increased their production by 19 percent, Illinois farmers, by 14 percent, and Arizona's producers, by 12 percent.

Lackawanna County Extension Director Tom Jurchak said he thought the production increases would continue to grow for the foreseeable future. The reason, he said, was that feed prices are low — and will probably be low for quite some time, as a result of 1985's bumper crop of feed grains here and in the Midwest.

He said lowering the support price to \$11.10 — one of the many approaches being considered now in Congress — might not be enough to slow down production.

## Dauphin County farmer appeals 'clean and green' assessments

BY JAMES H. EVERHART  
 HARRISBURG — The chairman of the Dauphin County Conservation District has filed an appeal that challenges the county's reassessment of agricultural land enrolled in the statewide Clean and Green Assessment Program.

DCCD Chairman Russ Cassel is filing the appeal for his 290-acre dairy farm in South Hanover Township. But he anticipates that any ruling would affect all of the county's participants in the program.

Cassel is challenging the county Board of Assessment's 1985 Reassessment, which, in effect, simply doubled 1973 assessments of all real estate in the county.

Even though ag land would be valued the same, relative to other



Dauphin County Conservation District chairman Russell Cassel goes over his notes with DCCD Director David Ball, just after Cassel filed an appeal of his farm's assessment with the Dauphin County Board of Assessment Appeals.

property in the county, Cassel contends the reassessment does not comply with the terms of the 1974 act which created the program.

The land, he contends, should only be reassessed on the use value of the property, which, he says, has not doubled since 1973 — and may, in fact, have dropped.

His proposal would continue the ag land at 100 percent of the 1973 assessment levels rather than the 200 percent set by the assessment board for all Dauphin County real estate. If accepted by the board, his plan would actually lower taxes paid by farmers participating in the program.

The appeal could have wide-ranging impact on similar reassessments in other counties. The Dauphin County Board of Commissioners has adopted a resolution in support of Cassel's appeal.

The issue is complicated slightly by the assessment history. Though

the last countywide assessment occurred in 1973, the figures for the affected ag properties were established in 1976, when the county established its Clean and Green Program.

Unlike the procedure followed in 1976, this year's assessment was not based on the use value of the land, Cassel says. It did not use information from the State Department of Agriculture, or from soil surveys conducted by Penn State, the National Cooperative Soil Survey, or the U.S. Census of Agricultural Categories of Land Use.

"The doubling of the Clean and Green Program's use-values for the 1985 reassessment cannot be justified," Cassel wrote in his appeal. "The law and the rules and regulations mandate a two-step process which the assessor must follow in determining preferential assessments."

"The assessor is obligated not

## Grubb hearings slated Sept. 30 in Senate



Richard E. Grubb

BY JAMES H. EVERHART  
 HARRISBURG — The State Senate's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee will hold hearings Monday, Sept. 30, on Dr. Richard E. Grubb's nomination as state Secretary of Agriculture.

Senate sources indicated that little opposition to Grubb has surfaced, despite criticism of the nomination by the Pennsylvania Farmer's Association.

PFA is opposing the Grubb nomination, citing the nominee's lack of experience in production agriculture, his unfamiliarity with current ag issues and inexperience in state-level politics. Other farm organizations, including the state Grange, have endorsed the choice.

Asked about the nomination process this week, Grubb said he

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## Tobacco Auction to hold meeting

BLUE BALL — The first in a series of tobacco growers' meetings is scheduled for Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m., at the Blue Ball School. The school is located on Ewell Road, one-half mile east of Blue Ball between Route 322 and 23.

Sponsored by Pa. Tobacco Auction Inc., the meeting will acquaint growers with procedures for selling tobacco through the newly organized auction. PTA officers will be on hand to answer questions.

According to auction manager Eric Probst, more weekly meetings throughout Lancaster County will be scheduled, with dates and locations to be announced at a later date.

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