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Congress staying late to pass ag legislation

Conference committee works on Farm Bill; Farm Credit aid packages up for final vote

BY JAMES H. EVERHART
WASHINGTON — The U.S. Congress is scheduled to put in some late nights and work right through the weekend to pass vital farm legislation before it adjourns for the year.

A 61-member Conference Committee was burning the midnight oil this week to resolve the wide differences between the House and Senate versions of the 1985 Farm Bill.

Meanwhile, Congressional leadership was maneuvering to put the emergency Farm Credit rescue package on the President's desk in almost record time.

The Farm Bill package con-

tinued its snail's pace through the legislative process, on the other hand, as the Conference Committee hammered out compromise planks.

Capitol insiders reported that the leadership may have already worked out informal deals on the key planks, to smooth the way for passage.

Included in the compromise was the controversial House dairy proposal, reportedly accepted by the conference, despite the paid diversion, whole-herd buyout and cost-of-production pricing system that the Reagan Administration has vehemently opposed in the past.

Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole was reportedly trying to keep the Congress in session through Tuesday, in order to pass the landmark legislation. Congress had originally planned to begin its Christmas recess Friday.

Earlier this week, the Congress had okayed separate versions of the Farm Credit bill, before, in effect, moving the House version through channels, with approval expected imminently at press time.

House Ag Committee Chairman E. "Kika" de la Garza and Dole were reportedly working on the bill personally, in order to come up with a compromise that would not

have to go to a House-Senate conference.

Essentially, the Farm Credit legislation slated for Congressional approval is the House bill with some minor modifications, mostly operational.

Major provisions of the credit package include:

System Self-Help

This portion of the bill is designed to enable the System to assist troubled individual institutions by more effectively marshalling the resources of its network of Federal Land Banks, Federal Intermediate Credit Banks and Banks for Cooperatives. To accomplish this, the bill

requires the creation of a new FCS institution to be called the Farm Credit System Capital Corporation.

The FCS-CC would:

- Provide a central source of financial assistance to individual FCS institutions.

- Serve as a System-wide "warehouse" to which System institutions could sell acquired properties and loans on which farmers had not made payments. The FCS-CC could hold, restructure, guarantee and administer the loans, and it could refinance, reamortize or otherwise adjust debts for borrowers on any such purchased loans, or eventually

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1,500 expected for Mid-Atlantic No-till

TIMONIUM — They're not expecting a new record, but organizers of the Mid-Atlantic No-Till Conference anticipate upwards of 1,500 growers to attend the annual event Wednesday at the



John F. Marten

Maryland State Fairground here.

"There's still some corn and soybeans to be harvested," remarked University of Maryland press specialist T. Milton Nelson, who is publicity chairman for the event. If the day looks favorable for harvesting, he added, attendance might be reduced.

Registration for the event, also may have been affected by several smaller no-till meetings, which have been launched this year in Delaware and Allentown. However, the Mid-Atlantic event, currently in its 12th year, remains the "granddaddy" of them all, Nelson added.

The featured speaker for the event, John F. Marten of West Lafayette, IN., may find his subject changing right up to the last minute. At the planning stages, organizers assumed that the 1985 Farm Bill would already have been passed, and asked the

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Breakfast aids Ag land preserve

LANCASTER — Whether you're hungry, or you want to help preserve prime agricultural land, you can satisfy both yearnings today or Sunday.

Just attend the holiday season country buffet breakfast sponsored today and Sunday at the Family Style Restaurant, 4½ miles east of Lancaster on the Lincoln Highway East.

The buffet, which will benefit the Lancaster County Agricultural Land Preservation Fund, will cost only \$3, all of which will be used for ag land preservation activities.

Area suppliers have donated food and materials, while the owners of the restaurant have donated facilities and staff time to prepare the meal.

Will ewe numbers double? Rocco may need 500 Pa. lambs a day

BY JACK HUBLEY
GRANTVILLE — If industry leaders have their way, 1985 may prove to be the pivotal year for the East Coast sheep industry.

The catalyst for change is Rocco Enterprises, Inc., the well-known Virginia-based poultry processor that has vowed to escalate its lamb slaughter to 10,000 animals a week at its further processing plant in Timberville, Va. Now when Rocco speaks, the sheep industry listens.

More than 100 representatives of private industry, government and state agricultural organizations were listening on Tuesday evening when an address by Rocco's executive vice president James Darazsdi kicked off a two-day sheep industry leader forum.

Since its beginnings as a feedmill in 1939, Rocco has blossomed to nine divisions with its headquarters located in Harrisonburg, Va. Best known as a poultry processor, the company operates the largest turkey processing plant in the world.

located in Timberville, the Rocco Further Processing plant devotes half of its 90,000 square feet of floor space to poultry and the other half to lamb slaughter. Though Rocco lamb is marketed strictly in boxed form at the

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James Darazsdi

PTA to hold first tobacco auction in 40 years

BY JACK HUBLEY
INTERCOURSE — Tobacco buyers representing companies in North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia will be attending Pennsylvania's first tobacco auction in 40 years on Monday, according to Pennsylvania Tobacco Auction, Inc., general manager Eric Probst.

The event will take place at the sale barn owned by Martin Auctioneers, Inc., located two miles east of Intercourse on Route 340. The sale gets underway at 9 a.m. and will continue until all tobacco has been sold, said Probst.

According to PTA's manager, 327,000 pounds of Maryland Type 609 cigarette tobacco has been consigned for Monday's sale. For Wednesday's sale, 342,000 pounds will go across the auction block, and at least 310,000 pounds have been committed for Friday's sale.

"That's about all we've got room for," said Probst, noting that a recently completed addition to the existing auction barn adds 8,000 feet of floor space to the original 10,000-square-foot building.

"We expect the market to open up not too much stronger than it was last year," said Probst. The best tobacco should sell for about \$1.05 to \$1.15 a pound he said, adding that he has heard talk of prices going as high as \$1.18. "The buyers have hit the field pretty hard since last Saturday, and they really want to buy tobacco," Probst said.

The sale's auctioneer will be Mitch Ashby, a professional tobacco auctioneer from North Carolina.

Tobacco will be graded according to "tips," "middles" and "bottoms," and will be displayed

on skids containing 10 bales of a single grade, the PTA manager said. The auctioneer will walk down the aisles auctioning tobacco by the skid, with buyers following on the opposite side of the skids. The high bid will be written on the skid ticket, and sellers as well as buyers will have 30 minutes to reject a bid after it is recorded. Tobacco not sold will be immediately put up for resale.

Probst stressed that all tobacco sold must be paid for on the day of the sale, and sellers should be able to pick up their checks by late afternoon. "We think we can have most of the auction over by noon," he said.

The two cent-per-pound assessment charged to buyers represents a savings over traditional handling charges, said Probst. "They've been paying up

to five to eight cents a pound to receive tobacco directly from the farmer," Probst said. "We provide all those services for two cents a pound." Growers will also pay two cents to sell their product at the auction.

Probst and the PTA are certain that the auction will prove to be an improvement over the county's traditional marketing method. In years past, buyers would canvass the county, buying tobacco on a one-on-one basis directly from the farmer.

Though early sales will feature only Maryland 609, Pennsylvania Type 41, commonly used in the cigar and chewing tobacco trade, may come under the gavel as well. "If we have a successful sale of Type 609, we expect sales of Type 41 to fall into place," Probst said. Monday's event will be the first

tobacco auction to be held in Lancaster County since 1946. More than 90 percent of the state's total tobacco crop is grown here, said Probst.

Red Rose DHIA holds meeting

Lancaster County DHIA members and supervisors received a host of awards and certificates during the annual Red Rose DHIA banquet this week.

To find out who had the county's top producing herds and which supervisors were recognized for outstanding service turn to page A24.