

Lancaster Farming

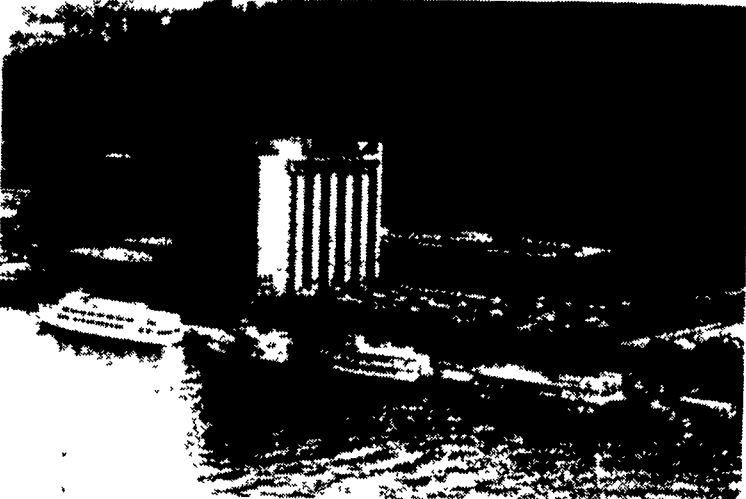
FEB 19 1986

VOL. 31 No. 16

Four Sections

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, February 15, 1986

\$7.50 per year



Holstein Association members from across the state will gather at the luxurious Sheraton Hotel at Station Square, in downtown Pittsburgh, for their annual convention next weekend.

Holstein, beef, pork meetings next week

PITTSBURGH — Dairy and livestock breeders of all kinds will be holding annual meetings next week at scattered sites throughout the area.

The Pennsylvania Holstein Association will kick things off on Thursday, with its annual convention in Pittsburgh.

Also on Thursday, the state's swine producers are looking forward to the Keystone Pork Congress at the Penn Harris Motor Inn in Harrisburg.

Meanwhile, the state Cattlemen's Association holds its annual conference and "Spring Fling" Friday through Sunday at the Allenberry Resort in Boiling Springs.

Dairy matters spread next door to Maryland where the Maryland Holstein Association's Annual Meeting runs Friday and Saturday in Hagerstown.

Holstein breeders from across Pennsylvania converge on Pittsburgh to start this weekend of annual meetings. This promises to

be an exciting activity packed weekend, unlike any others in recent years.

A mall promotion designed to promote milk is scheduled for the Friday and Saturday right in the Station Square Freight House shops. Here dairy princesses from around the state will be making such dairy products as butter and ice cream. A live calf will also be on display at the Spring House store in the mall and is certain to attract a crowd.

Pittsburgh area school children, grades K through three, have been invited to tour the mall beginning with a "barn tour". This barn tour is actually the sale cows housed in the parking garage adjacent to the Sheraton.

The sale, Friday night with 48 cows cataloged, promises to be interesting.

Hoofprints will lead them from the cows to Station Square and the mall promotion. Here they will also be submitting entries for a coloring contest.

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Dairymen uncertain as buyout details released

BY JAMES H. EVERHART

LANCASTER — For well or ill, government program or not, area dairy farmers are eying the federal government's new herd buyout program with a mixture of skepticism, uncertainty and unease.

But one thing is certain, they are eying it. Though few experts expect massive numbers to participate, the region's dairymen are being driven by necessity to at least give the plan a run-through — to see if it really "pencils out."

At meetings throughout the area, dairymen heard the experts explain the regulations, talk about the ifs, ands, and provisos, and generally urge caution in formulating a proposal.

But at least in Lancaster, they also heard Extension Service Dairy Agent Glenn Shirk offer some sobering thoughts on

dairying over the next few years.

Admitting he was painting a bleak picture, Shirk explained that a combination of factors — including the new Farm Bill, the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction plan and overall milk consumption — will remake the economics of dairying over the next few years.

"I hate to be pessimistic," Shirk said in unveiling a table listing October 1987 milk support prices ranging from \$8.73 to \$10.23 a hundredweight. "But I have to present the facts."

Shirk noted that Gramm-Rudman cuts will either pare \$2.25 from the support price, or, if a new proposal is successful, will result in a 50-cent-per-cwt. assessment.

And the herd-buyout plan, he said, will offer a way for many to leave the industry . . . and it certainly won't pave the way for them to reenter in the future.

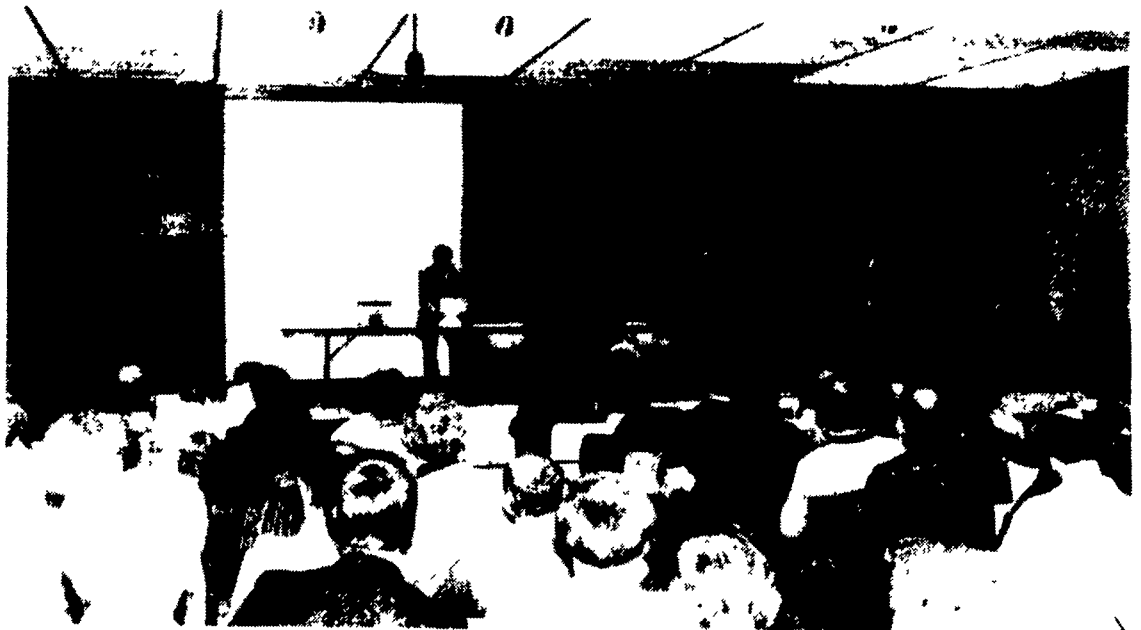
"It's meant to be rough," he said, "not popular, but rough."

As Shirk and Lancaster County ASCS head Ray Brubaker explained the regulations, there were sighs, snickers and a lot of questions. But there was no doubt that USDA means business this time around.

In summary, the dairymen learned that program participants cannot allow their milk-producing facilities to be used in milk production for five years. Nor can they own or have any interest in dairy animals themselves.

They can, for instance, raise grain and sell it to their neighbor to feed to his cows. Both their silos and barns can be leased to store feed for another person's dairy operation. They may even allow a neighbor to graze his heifers on their property.

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A crowd of about 250 dairymen listens as speakers outline the details of the herd buyout program Monday at the Farm and Home Center in Lancaster.

Vo-ag students find heavier academic load complicates scheduling

BY SUZANNE KEENE

LANCASTER — Controversy stirs in vocational classrooms across the state as this year's high school freshmen juggle their schedules to fit in a heavier load of required academic credits. The concern is that students wishing to enter vocational programs will not be able to squeeze in all the courses they need, especially if they fail a

required class.

The '80s have brought a renewed interest in education and a move "back to basics." As part of his plan for strengthening the educational system, Governor Thornburgh directed the Department of Education to develop a program to update and improve the vocational program in the state's schools.

The result of this effort was Chapter 5, which updates the curriculum requirements for all public and nonpublic, nonlicensed schools, and Chapter 6, which outlines general provisions for vocational education.

Under these curriculum requirements approved in February of 1984, students who will graduate in 1989 are required to take additional academic courses to receive a high school diploma. In the past, students in four-year high schools needed a total of 16 credits for graduation. Under the provisions of Chapters 5 and 6, that total has jumped to 21 credits.

Students are required to take an additional credit in each of math, science and social studies, plus 2 credits of arts and/or humanities. They must also take one credit of health and physical education and five additional courses, including vocational educational classes.

While few would contest the importance of academic courses, vocational instructors and directors are concerned about the effect Chapters 5 and 6 will have on vocational programs.

Peter Uhlig, director of Lebanon County Vo-Tech says: "Chapters 5 and 6 were written with certain purposes in mind to meet certain needs. Unfortunately, vocational education in that whole process wasn't as highlighted as it should have been."

"It's a good thing for academic students," says Jim Kerr, president of the Pennsylvania Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association and a horticulture teacher at Willow Street Vo-Tech in Lancaster County. "But," he adds, "it has reduced the students in ag." The additional academic requirements make it difficult, if not impossible, for students to squeeze vocational courses into

their heavy schedules.

Carl Graver, a guidance counselor at Smith Middle School in Lancaster County's Solanco School District, agrees that the additional requirements have made scheduling more complicated. "It makes it tougher to get a diploma," he said.

Education swings back and forth like a pendulum, and right now, Graver said, the pendulum is pointed in the academic direction. "I think the students feel this," he noted, and the result will be fewer students in both vo-tech and vo-ag programs.

Because of the changing programs, some vo-tech schools, including Lebanon County Vo-Tech and Lancaster County's Willow Street and Brownstown vo-tech schools, are moving to a seniors-only system. Before, students in

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FFA Week starts today

Nearly a half million FFA members across the country will be promoting vocational agriculture and the agricultural industry during FFA Week, Feb. 15 to 22. This year's theme, "Leaders for the New Fields of Agriculture," will highlight the students' promotional efforts.

To recognize these student's

and their importance to the future of agriculture, Lancaster Farming profiles two of Pennsylvania FFA's top members, the state Star Farmer and Star Agribusinessman on page B18. Staff correspondent Sally Barr also talked with state FFA vice president Charles Kline; turn to page B2 for an interview with this outstanding student