

Woodland hits 'cheap' barley imports

CORNING, IA — National Farmers Organization President DeVon Woodland today blasted the import of cheap barley, which he said dealt another blow to financially strapped grain producers.

Woodland, in making the announcement, charged that Continental Grain Company's recent action to buy barley in New Zealand and ship it into the United States is a psychological tactic aimed at breaking already depressed domestic markets.

"This action continues a pattern by major grain companies to use imports to eliminate any opportunity grain producers may have to benefit from improved prices," Woodland emphasized. "It seems that major grain companies will stop at nothing to

drive prices lower."

He called this action a "major blow" to American grain producers, who are already facing disastrous prices for grain, and pointed out that it is one of a continuing series of importing actions being taken by large agribusinesses without regard for U.S. farmers.

Woodland urged grain producers to demand an explanation from Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng on why these imports of feed grains are being allowed to come into this country when grain prices are already drastically below loan-clearing levels. Lyng, the farm leader pointed out, will be in Atlantic, Iowa, April 3 to talk with farm leaders.

This importing action came on

top of other recent government tactics, such as Farm Bill amendments and untimely release of PIK grains, to drive grain prices downward, he added.

The NFO president urged producers to immediately use the all-commodity marketing agency in common developed by the National Farmers Organization to counteract these pressures and strategies used by buyers and the present marketing structure.

He said producers must, first, demand an explanation from local ASCS officials of the 50/92 option as it now stands following late-breaking amendments. Under eleventh-hour amendments, Woodland pointed out, most states still allow producers to use haying and grazing practices on 50 per-

cent of permitted base acres while benefitting from a 92 percent deficiency payment.

"Even if producers have already signed up for the program," he said, "they should not consider their contract with the government final until local ASCS officials have thoroughly explained their options under the 50/92 provision."

Woodland also urged producers to immediately commit all PIK grain with the National Farmers Organization. This group action, he said, gives producers the best opportunity to counter the price-depressing affects of the release of PIK grain in May and importing actions.

Hog numbers down 3 percent

HARRISBURG — Inventory of all hogs and pigs on March 1, 1986, in the 10 states conducting quarterly hog surveys is estimated at 38.6 million head, three percent below last March 1, according to the Pennsylvania Crop and Livestock Reporting Service. This is four percent below March 1, 1984 and the lowest March 1 inventory since 1976. The 10 quarterly states are Georgia, Illinois, Indiana,

Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina and Ohio.

Breeding inventory, at 4.99 million head, is four percent less than last year and eight percent less than March 1, 1984. This is the lowest March 1 breeding herd inventory since 1973, when estimates for these comparable 10 states became available. Market hog inventory, at 33.6 million head, is two percent below a year earlier, three percent below two years ago and the lowest March 1 market hog inventory since 1977.

The December 1985-February 1986 pig crop was 14.9 million head, one percent above the corresponding period last year and four percent above two years ago. There were 1.94 million sows that farrowed during the quarter, a decrease of one percent from the comparable quarter both last year and two years ago.

Sows farrowings averaged 7.67 pigs per litter compared with 7.51 last year and 7.27 two years ago. The litter rate is the highest of record for a December-February quarter.

Hog producers in the 10 quarterly states intend to have 2.32 million sows farrow during March-May of this year. If these intentions are realized, farrowings would total four percent less than the actual number for the comparable period of 1985 and six percent less than the 1984 quarter. Farrowing intentions for June-August are 2.18 million head, slightly below actual farrowings for the same period last year and three percent less than two years ago.

Rabbit meeting set for June

UNIVERSITY PARK — Rabbits will outnumber people in Pennsylvania by the year 2000, if the present trend continues. Approximately one million young rabbits are being produced annually in Pennsylvania by 24,000 commercial breeders. In 1970, only 50,000 rabbits were produced by 2000 breeders.

The rabbit has been in demand as a pet, a show animal, a laboratory model, and as a source of meat and pelts. How to Provide for Better Health for Rabbits through Management is the theme of the 1986 Rabbit Conference to be held June 13 and 14, 1986 at University Park, Pa.

To obtain a program and additional information on the conference, write to: Rabbit Conference, Short Course Office, 306 Ag. Administration Building, University Park, Pa. 16802. All rabbit breeders are welcome.

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