

Lancaster Farming

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A dairyman in buyout shares his thoughts

To get first-hand thoughts and experiences of a dairyman who made an accepted bid in the whole-herd buyout program, Lancaster Farming's Editor, Everett Newswanger met with James F. Myer, 170 W. Brubaker Valley Road, Lititz, this week. The interview in Myer's farm home sought to answer such questions as: Was enough information available to make the decision on a bid price?; Did the decision pose any moral or ethical questions?; What effect did mass media reports have on personal relationships in the farm community?; and Would this dairyman do it again?

Here are the questions and the answers given:

NEWSWANGER - How long have you been in the dairy business?

MYER - Since 1961, about 25 years.

NEWSWANGER - How many animals from your herd are in the buyout program?

MYER - A total of 296. This includes milking animals and all young stock.

NEWSWANGER - What factors went into your decision to enter the program?

MYER - The amount of emphasis recently on the milk surplus



James Myer shares his thoughts about the whole herd buyout program from his farm home north of Lititz.

probably got my attention as much as anything. I was convinced there was a milk surplus nationwide even though locally there may not be a real big surplus.

NEWSWANGER - Did you find enough information available to

make your bid decision?

MYER - The bidding information from the government's side was very limited. Farmers were pretty much in the dark about the government's thinking on what

(Turn to Page A27)

New twist in tillage

Slit till system saves soil, water, time and money

BY JACK HUBLEY

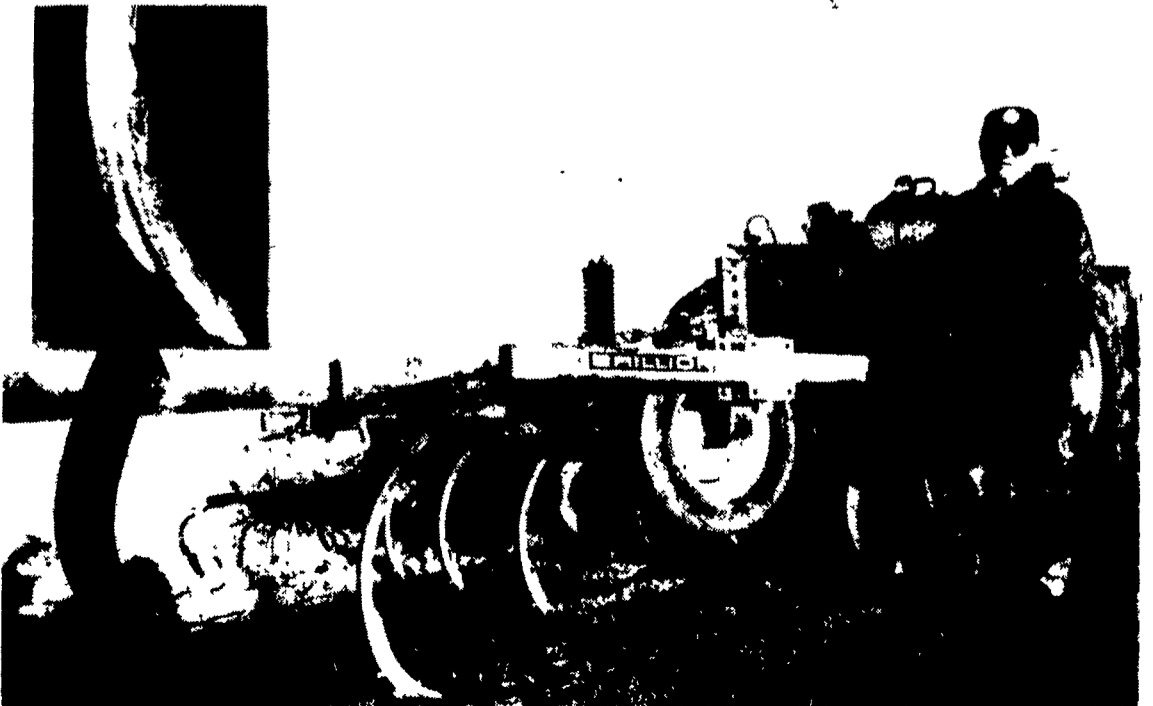
LANCASTER — Any way you slice it, tillage is simply manipulating the soil in preparation for planting. The trick is to keep the ground where it belongs after heavy equipment has jarred it loose from its moorings.

Today's crop farmer has a broad range of techniques and equipment at his disposal to get the job done, from the traditional moldboard plow to no-till systems, and plenty of imaginative variations in between.

One option that seems to fall

smack in the middle of these two extremes is the slit system employed by Herbert Myer of Lancaster County. Myer farms 110 acres of corn near the town of Lampeter and has been using what he's dubbed slit tillage on his corn

(Turn to Page A24)



To modify his chisel plow for slit tillage, Myer removed half the chisel shanks and replaced standard chisel shovels with two-inch-wide teeth (see inset). Disks mounted in front of the unit help to guide the five chisel teeth, spaced 30 inches apart.



Mrs. Scott (left, bottom photo) and her herdsman, Heinz Meilke will be welcoming visitors from across the country to Ardrossan Farms when the 111th National Convention comes to Pennsylvania April 22 to 25.

This issue has features about Ardrossan Farms on A-20, and Masonic Homes on A-22. Also included are interviews with outstanding Ayrshire individuals Wesley Harding, Jr. on A-26 and Milton Brubaker on A-31. Look for complete coverage of this convention in next week's issue.

Suspect turkey flock does not have avian flu

BY JACK HUBLEY

HARRISBURG — According to test results received yesterday morning, a suspect Lancaster County turkey flock does not contain the deadly H5N2 avian influenza virus.

Following a flu outbreak in a gamebird flock near Ephrata last week, surveillance efforts uncovered a virus of unknown type in a nearby turkey flock. By press time yesterday PDA spokesman Bob Bunty was able to confirm that the first half of the virus had been typed as "H1", which is definitely not avian influenza, and may turn out to be swine flu.

"There was a suspicion that it was swine flu as we went into the testing," said Bunty, adding that there are hogs being raised on the premises. If further testing does confirm the presence of swine flu, no depopulation will be necessary, Bunty said. The tests are being done by the National Veterinary Services Lab in Ames, Iowa.

The latest confirmed outbreak of avian flu occurred in an Ephrata-area gamebird flock containing 1,200 chukars and 800 guinea fowl. The flock was depopulated Wednesday.

Both the state's Department of Agriculture and Poultry Federation consider it to be an isolated incident posing no major threat to the poultry industry.

"It seems to be linked to a trucker from New Jersey," said the Poultry Federation's Tim Allwein, adding that the poultry hauler stopped to pick up a load of birds at the Ephrata-area farm sometime during late March or early April. One week later the trucker's farm was found to be infected with the virus.

Only two weeks ago, Agriculture Secretary Richard Grubb declared the state to be free of avian influenza and called for an end to the embargoes on Pennsylvania poultry and products imposed by numerous states and a number of foreign countries.

"We asked for an end to embargoes because we believed our state to be a safe one from which to purchase poultry and eggs," said Grubb. "In view of our effective surveillance program and our industry's cooperation, we still believe so."