

# Farmers Union Members Meet USDA Chief

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Pennsylvania Farmers Union members met with the new U.S.D.A. Secretary, Richard Lyng, on April 8 while in town for a two-day lobbying trip.

Members of the general family farm organization discussed a variety of concerns with the Secretary, including:

- Sodbuster regulations which, as currently written, would make the normal soil conservation practice of rotating crops on contour strips a violation leaving a farmer ineligible for participation in farm programs.
- A foreign-owned 10,000 head dairy operation in Georgia, much of which was financed through Georgia's tax exempt bonds.
- The downward effect that the

whole-herd buyout dairy program is having on beef prices paid to farmers, due to increased numbers of cows available for slaughter.

• The need to keep milk prices at a fair level for dairy farmers still in production, so they won't need to increase their milk output in order to maintain their cash flow, thereby defeating the purpose of the whole-herd buyout.

• The possibility of a quota system in the dairy industry that would focus milk production on meeting demand instead of producing as much as possible.

• The need to maintain funding for essential agencies, such as the Soil Conservation Service and the Rural Electric Administration.

"We were pleased that the Secretary took the time to speak

with us and hear us out," said Pennsylvania Farmers Union President David Stetler, "but we were very disappointed by his apparent unwillingness to answer our questions or even to look into the problems we raised."

When asked if U.S.D.A. could apportion the number of cows

going to slaughter under the whole-herd buyout program, the Secretary responded that the government was not in the beef-buying business and that he did not feel he had the authority to intervene.

"The Secretary was given more discretion than ever in the last

farm bill," Stetler said. "Surely, he has the authority to make U.S.D.A.'s programs run the way they were intended to and deal with unexpected consequences when they come up."

The Pennsylvania Farmers Union represents family-farmers in 31 chartered counties across the Commonwealth.



Pennsylvania Farmers Union members met recently with U.S.D.A. Secretary, Richard Lyng. (left to right) Lyng; Jack Rynd, President of Farmers Union Milk Producers' Association; Arden Tewksbury, General Manager of Northern Tier F.U.M.P.A.; and David Stetler, President of PA Farmers Union.

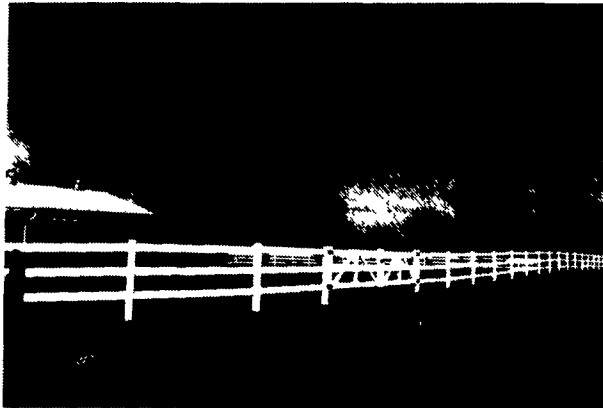
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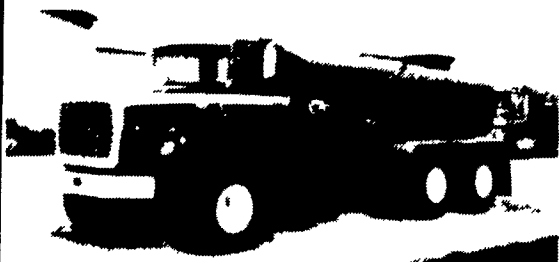
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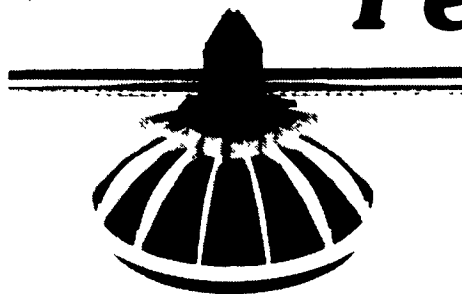
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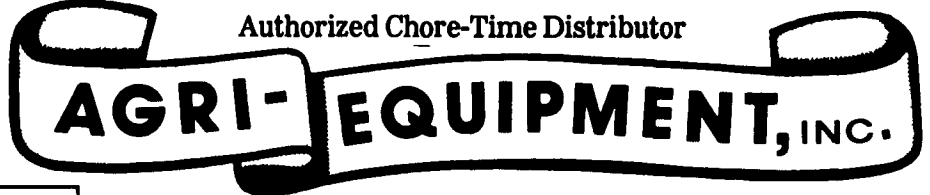
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