

# W. Va. Cattlemen Tour Keystone Beef Country

BY JACK HUBLEY

LANCASTER — West Virginia's cattlemen hopped a bus and headed north and east this week for a tour of Pennsylvania beef

operations. More than 60 cattlemen participated in the tour, sponsored by the West Virginia University Extension Service,

touring the state's cattle country from State College to the feedlots of Lancaster County.

Tour leader Phil Osborne, the Extension's livestock specialist, pointed out that southeastern Pennsylvania is important to his state's farm economy, since many of West Virginia's cattle are fattened on grain here. "Quite a few yearlings come into this area to be fed," said Osborne, adding that calves are also shipped to the Midwest.

Beef is the number-one agricultural commodity in West Virginia, where cow/calf and stockering operations market their forage crops in the form of red meat.

In light of the current plight of the beef industry, West Virginia scheduled the tour to promote its feeder cattle, as well as to find out what's in demand, Osborne said.

Although visits to cattle feeding operations dominated the three-day tour, the cattlemen also had a firsthand look at Penn State University's purebred cow operation and feeding trials,

Moyer Packing Company of Souderton and the Lancaster Stockyards.

During the latter tour, stockyards president Bill McCoy noted that the cattle business has been "showing red ink" for two years in a row. "The demand for the product has just slipped," he said, adding that imports and sales of overfat cattle have hurt the industry as well.

McCoy pointed out that prices have rallied somewhat in the past several weeks. Three weeks ago, more than half the cattle marketed at Lancaster were bringing less than 50 cents a pound, McCoy estimated, emphasizing that the break-even point for most cattle feeders on last fall's cattle is about 56 to 57 cents. Since July 4, prices

have risen to the 56-to-59-cent range, with a few retail sales topping 60 cents, he said.

The stockyards president sees the \$1-per-head checkoff program to be instituted nationally this fall as one of the brighter spots on the horizon. "I think this is going to help immeasurably," he said, adding that the industry needs this major source of capital to finance badly needed promotional programs.

Following the stockyards visit, tour members traveled to the Dale Nolt farm near Manheim, then on to the Milton Hershey School for a steak roast sponsored by the Pennsylvania Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association (PACMA) and the Beef Industry Council.



West Virginia Extension livestock specialist Phil Osborne talks with Lancaster Stockyards president Bill McCoy during Wednesday's tour of the stockyards.

## USDA Buyout Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The eighth weekly report on the buyout was released by the USDA on Wednesday.

USDA figures show an estimated 24,100 head of cattle in the program

were slaughtered during the week ending June 21. This figure includes all cows, heifers and calves in the DTP, according to the USDA spokesman.

An estimated cumulative total of 495,800 head have been slaughtered since the beginning of the DTP on April 1.

Meat purchases by the government reached 10.6 million pounds for the week ending July 5. This meat was purchased in the form of 3.8 million pounds of canned beef, 3.3 million pounds of bulk-frozen ground beef, and 4.2 million pounds of frozen beef carcasses.

The cumulative total meat purchases is 169,577,480 pounds.

Cumulative total of dairy cows that were reported for export since April 1 is 14,280 head. This total is expected to increase as foreign countries are preparing to take advantage of the Export Enhancement program.

SECTION 1 Page 1

### Dairy Metro

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