

Lancaster Farming

01 1 1986

VOL. 32 No. 3 Lancaster Farming, Saturday, November 22, 1986 Five Sections \$8.50 Per Year

Inter-State, Lehigh Members Approve Merger

BY MARTHA J. GEHRINGER

LANCASTER — Members of Inter-State and Lehigh Valley Farmers approved the merger between their cooperatives with a 91 percent affirmative vote, spokespersons for the co-ops announced Thursday at Inter-State's annual meeting.

The new co-op, Atlantic Dairy Cooperative, will begin operations on Feb. 1, 1987.

A breakdown of the vote reveals that Inter-State members voted in favor of the merger by 92 percent with 400 members casting a ballot. Of the 500 Lehigh Valley votes received by Nov. 19, 89 percent were affirmative.

Lehigh members had the option of voting in person at the various district meetings held throughout the state or by mail postmarked by Nov. 19. Judging by the response at their district meetings Lehigh officials do not expect the ballots

still in the mail to alter the percentage.

Inter-State members voted on the proposed merger on Nov. 14 in Lancaster at the first general membership meeting in the history of the cooperative. The Southampton based co-op held the meeting in accordance with its by-laws which require a general membership meeting for voting on a subject of this dimension.

Lehigh Valley needed a majority of the votes cast to be affirmative for the merger to go through. Inter-State needed a positive vote from a majority 10 percent of their membership for the merger to be validated.

Atlantic Dairy Cooperative will provide additional market strength and savings members can easily identify, William Stout said. Stout, general manager of Lehigh, noted there are long term benefits

and initial benefits for the members.

The initial and most visible benefits are cost reductions in the field through rerouting hauling routes. Stout said there is easily \$1 million and possibly more to be saved in this area. Paul Hand, general manager of Inter-State, explained that some routes could possibly be combined before Dec. 1.

Reduction of the duplication of professionals will also create a savings for members. Lehigh presently employs 20 people. Fieldmen comprise half of this force. Stout noted that all employees were offered a job but only the fieldmen and two office personnel would transfer to the new co-op.

The capital retain program will be ended for all Atlantic members who have over four years of

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Paul Hand, left, Robert McSparran and Robert Dever addressed the members at Inter-State's annual meeting this week.

Pa. Extension Agents Look To Future At Annual Convention

BY MARY MAXWELL

Centre County Correspondent

UNIVERSITY PARK — Cooperative extension staff members from throughout Pennsylvania met this week at the Keller Conference Center on the Penn State University campus. The 400 participants attended four days of meetings and workshops centered around the theme "Tools for the Future."

Chief among the tools, said Jim Welshans, Dauphin County Extension director and conference co-chairman, is electronic technology. Its effects are just beginning to be felt in Extension program.

The conference also addressed tools which have been around a long time: communication skills — both writing and speaking, and community volunteers. Keynote James Meyers, associate director of California Cooperative Extension Service, speaking on "Managing for the Future: Implications for Cooperative Extension," discussed the changes and challenges he expects to see.

Meyers recognized that many more

diverse groups now seek help from Extension programs. In addition to the traditional farm family the beneficiaries of Extension programs now include consumer and public health groups, farm laborers, commercial growers and animal rights activists.

Meyers also anticipates new economic challenges. Funding agencies will expect programs to be more cost effective and that demand will create difficulties for traditional Extension programs.

Meyers thinks cooperative extension needs to do more than disseminate information. "We need to be more active in promoting research which helps to solve local problems. Results of that research will help us justify our budgets before federal and state funding agencies."

Funding constraints may also affect the current geographically-defined extension system. "Maybe there are too many duplicated services with our rigid county structure," he added, "and a wider regional plan may prove efficient."

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Equipment Industry Outlook Shows Gradual Improvement

BY SUZANNE KEENE

LANCASTER — Farm equipment manufacturers and dealers have seen the last of the "good old days" of the prosperous 70s when farmers were buying tractors and combines faster than manufacturers could produce them.

When the farm economy took a turn for the worse in the late 70s and early 80s, the equipment business suffered as well. But the good news, equipment manufacturers said this week, is that the light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter.

"I think we've reached the bottom," said Richard Bielby, regional sales manager for Deutz-Allis Corporation. Bielby and seven colleagues from the industry discussed future industry trends during the Pennsylvania Farm Equipment Dealers Convention here this week.

However, Bielby cautioned, the financial shakeup will continue, but at a slower rate. "The hurting will gradually heal," he said.

But the mending process will not happen overnight. Bielby said he sees no significant improvement in major

machine sales during the coming year.

Other equipment dealers predict a similar future. Don Peters, regional manager for Massey-Ferguson Co., expects his company to experience little or no growth in 1987. However, Peters said he is optimistic that industry restructuring could bring back sales by the end of year and the company may see small profits.

But, he added, "We will not get back to the good old days."

Mark Johnson, sales manager for John Deere Co., reported that his company will lose money in 1986. "We don't see '86 as being a very positive year." But, he continued, "We do now see a little dimple of light at the end of the tunnel."

That light comes in the form of lower interest rates and declining fuel and land prices. Decreased input costs could mean some farmers will be able to purchase new equipment in 1987. Many farmers have been waiting for the economy to turn around before replacing old equipment.

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Experts Predict Mixed Economic Bag At PFA Meeting

BY JACK HUBLEY

HERSHEY — A panel of experts walked out on a limb at the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association's annual meeting on Tuesday and took a look at the state of the 1987 ag economy and its impact on dairy, livestock, grain and vegetable farmers.

The afternoon market outlook sessions were one part of the state PFA program that ran from Nov. 17 to 19 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center.

For the most part, the presentations were upbeat, save for Ron Manley's look at the beef and grain situations. Representing PFA's marketing cooperative, PACMA, Manley noted that "the government has control of the grain industry at this point." Corn is selling in the \$1.70-to-1.90 range on the futures market, and Manley

sees no prospect for an upturn in the near future, based on the amount of corn currently in storage.

"Chances are there will be some upside possibilities on soybean meal," said Manley. The extent of government soybean programs may contribute to a healthy market next year, he said.

The swine business is one of the brighter spots on the 1987 horizon, said Manley. "We think the hog prices are going to stay with us for a while," he said, predicting that the healthy market may last into June of next year. He attributed the sudden rise in hog prices to the Chernobyl nuclear incident, when Japan switched from the Scandinavian countries to the United States for its hogs. PFA's main concern regarding hogs is that

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Holiday Deadlines

The office of Lancaster Farming will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 27 in observance of Thanksgiving. Deadlines for the November 29 issue are as follows:

Mailbox Market Ads - noon Monday.

Public Sale Ads - 5 p.m. Monday.

General News- noon Wednesday.

Classified Section B Ads - 5 p.m. Tuesday.

All other classified Ads - 9 a.m. Wednesday

Late-breaking news - 8 a.m. Friday.



Accompanied by his wife Rosemarie, Paul Yahner (center) accepts PFA's Distinguished Service Award from association president Keith Eckel.