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Pennsylvania RCMA Steering Committee at the informational meeting in Harrisburg this week are (L to R): Robert Pardoe, Grange; Harold Wolfe, PFU; Arden Tewksbury, PFU; Harold Ely, chairman; Karl Kroeck, PFA; Carl Brown, PFA and Donald Duncan, Grange.

RCMA Sets Team In Place To Sign Up Independent Shippers

BY EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor
HARRISBURG — Wanted! Three thousand Pennsylvania milk producers who ship to independent milk plants. According to Harold Ely, chairman of the Regional Cooperative Marketing Agency (RCMA), these independent dairy shippers are wanted to join the growing number of dairymen across the state who have joined

together in their cooperatives to set milk prices above the federal order base prices. "Farmers have the legal right to bargain for a higher price for their milk," Ely told the group gathered in the Farm Show building this week. And RCMA is in place from the 1970s to do the job.

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See Editorial Page A-10 entitled Join RCMA Now.

Butz Is Bullish On Ag At Mid-Atlantic No-Till Conference

BY JACK HUBLEY
YORK — Former USDA Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz came to York on Dec. 17 and took the press to task for blowing the agricultural community's problems out of proportion.

Butz, who served as secretary from 1971 to 1976, was the keynote speaker at the Mid-Atlantic No-Till Conference held at the York Fairgrounds.

"This is not a dying industry," Butz said, pointing out that nationwide, agriculture's debt-to-asset ratio is 23 percent. Almost one-half of all American farmers have no debt, he said. And of the remaining half, about 50 percent have debts amounting to less than 20 percent of their assets.

Butz described the current restructuring of the agricultural economy as more of a natural economic evolution than a tragedy. Attempts by some politicians to "save the family farm" are based on emotionalism rather than sound economics. Staying competitive means that farmers need to embrace new technologies that cut their cost of production. And to do

that, each operation must be spread over more acres, Butz said.

On a lighter note, the former ag secretary pointed out that there are actually two definitions of the family farm. The "economic family farm" is large enough to allow its owner to make a living, while the "political family farm"

is small enough to enable its owner to "starve to death slowly."

Not all farmers will survive the current crisis, Butz said. "Perhaps they shouldn't make it, but that is not unique to American agriculture," he said, pointing out that the economic climate is weeding out the poorer managers

in many areas of business and industry as well.

Butz was critical of government programs that don't allow those poorer managers to sift through the grates. "If you attempt to guarantee everybody against failure, then you remove the possibility of success beyond mediocrity," he said. "We need a safety net, but not at such a level that the government becomes the primary market."

Butz singled out the dairy industry as a prime example of how the "safety net" has caused problems. Forages feed the dairy industry, making milk, in essence, liquified grass, he said. Grass grows best in the northern states, so it follows that milk production should be centered there, but price supports have been high enough to put the southern states in the dairy business, he said.

Butz sees light at the end of the tunnel in the form of increased exports spurred by lower loan rates that will make American commodities more competitive on the world market. "It's begun to work," he said, pointing out that the physical volume, if not the dollar volume, of U.S. exports has increased in 1986 over the previous year.

Turning to the no-till conference, Butz said he was glad to hear the event's speakers emphasizing

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Pipestone Experts Address First Shepherds Symposium

BY BETH NESBIT
Indiana Co. Correspondent

SOMERSET — Presentations by a team of sheep husbandrymen from Minnesota's Pipestone Sheep Project highlighted the first annual Keystone Shepherds Symposium held here on Dec. 19 and 20.

One of the event's featured speakers was Ian Cunningham of Pipestone who, along with his wife Tammy, manages a commercial flock of 450 Finn Cross and Rambouillet ewes. Ian's topic concentrated on how he and his

wife developed a successful sheep operation in Minnesota. Their annual lambing percentage is currently over 200 percent. Due to their many innovative husbandry practices, such as successfully raising triplets on the ewe, special ewe feeding programs and use of low-cost facilities, they have been widely recognized for their working knowledge of sheep production.

Health Problems
Addressing the area of sheep
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PVATA Past President Receives State Award

WILLOW STREET — James Kerr, immediate past president of the Pennsylvania Vocational Agricultural Technical Teachers Association, was honored earlier this month with the state vocational agricultural teachers' association award.

The award, presented to Kerr during the National Vocational Agricultural Teachers' Association convention, honors immediate past presidents of state associations for outstanding professional activities in conducting state association programs. The convention was held in Dallas, Texas Dec. 5 through 9.

To qualify for the award, state associations must meet a list of stringent requirements designed to encourage professional activities among state associations.

Kerr, a vocational horticulture teacher at Lancaster County

Vocational Technical Schools, reviewed an extensive list of accomplishments achieved during his term as PVATA president (1985-86).

Among those accomplishments he listed were: a state newsletter distributed to all state association members; a state Program of Work developed and distributed to all members and committees; delegates attending the national convention in Atlanta; 10 percent of the members qualified for the NVATA "Thirty-Minute Club;" and two studies that improved the instructional program, teacher welfare or the professional organization.

Kerr also worked with legislators to achieve legislation allowing students to substitute up to one academic credit per year for a vocational program. This allows vocational students to obtain

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James Kerr

Lancaster Co. Ag Agent Arnold Lueck Retires

BY SALLY BARR

Lancaster Co. Correspondent
LANCASTER — Lancaster Countians paid tribute Sunday to Arnold G. Lueck, who is retiring from the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service after 25 years as the county's agronomy and horticulture specialist.

At a reception held at the Farm and Home Center, County Commissioner James Huber summed up the feelings of many when he said, "Because of Arnie, Lancaster County is a better place to live." Huber acknowledged the large part Lueck played in helping to maintain Lancaster County as the Garden Spot of the nation, and thanked him for his "active help to preserve our great agricultural heritage."

State Senator Noah Wenger, in presenting him with a resolution passed by the state Senate recognizing his work, said, "We honor him for his career of service to the community and to the county, and for a career which has touched many lives." He, too, praised Lueck for helping to keep Lancaster County "among the

most progressive in the nation and in the world." He added, "You've done a good job. We're proud of you."

John Weidman, who served as master of ceremonies, said, "Arnie received modestly but gave generously." He thanked Lueck on

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Holiday Deadlines

The office of Lancaster Farming will be closed in observance of New Year's Day holiday.

Advertisers and news sources are asked to meet the following deadlines for the Jan. 3 issue. Mailbox Market and public sale ads, Monday at 5 p.m.; General news, Classified Section B and display ads, Tuesday noon; all other classified, 9 a.m. Thursday; and late-breaking news, noon Thursday.

Materials for Lancaster Farming's special Farm Show issue, to be published Jan. 10, should also be received at the Lancaster Farming office as soon as possible. News deadline is Monday, Jan. 6