

# 1,500 Sows Power York County's Valley Pork

LANCASTER — Valley Pork, Inc. of Seven Valley, York County, went on line in spring of 1986 pumping hog waste into an anaerobic digester designed to deodorize manure and produce a substantial portion of the electricity and hot water necessary to run the 1,500-sow farrow to finish operation.

Valley Pork is a subsidiary of the Lancaster County-based Hershey Equipment Company.

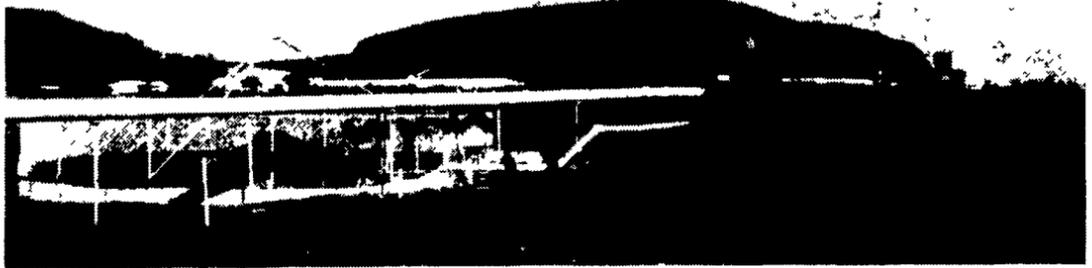
RCM Digesters, Inc. was contracted by Hershey in 1985 to design and start the digester. RCM is a Berkeley, California cogeneration company, founded in 1982. An RCM dairy digester functions at the Frey Dairy Farm in Conestoga, Lancaster County. Five RCM digesters operate in California, including a 1,000-cow dairy and a 180,000 bird layer operation.

Valley Pork waste handling is similar to most farrow-to-finish hog operations. Manure is stored in large tanks. With only minor plumbing changes, however, a digester has been added. Manure is pumped into a horseshoe-shaped 38-by-150-by-12-foot-deep digester. Once processed, the manure, now significantly lower in odor, is discharged into tanks where it is held for later land spreading.

The process of treating the waste is simple but entirely dependent on bacterial action. No chemicals are added. The manure is converted to a biogas mixture of methane and carbon dioxide which is combusted in a specially designed 6-cylinder 195-horsepower Caterpillar 3306 engine. The attached generator converts engine torque into electricity for use on the farm or sale to the local public utility. During summer and fall the system has consistently reduced farm energy bills between \$5000 and \$6000 per month as compared to 1985. Approximately 18,000 gallons of treated manure is now being taken from the digester daily.

While supplying substantial portions of the electrical requirements of the farm and deodorizing the manure, the process also is designed to provide all the hot washdown water required to maintain the strict sanitary conditions in the hog houses. Additional heat is recovered and used in the hog house heating system.

By efficient heat recovery, Valley Pork is saving the cost of fuel oil and electrical energy normally purchased. The system has a calculated payback period of less than four years.



Combustible methane and carbon dioxide is drawn from the hog manure at Valley Pork, Inc. System deodorizes manure and produces enough electricity to pay for itself in four years.

## Polled Hereford Assoc. Names Officers

HARRISBURG — A Washington County cattleman will serve as president of the recently reorganized Pennsylvania Polled Hereford Association. Dr. Les Midla, owner of Flat Stone Lick Farm, Marianna, was elected during the association's annual Farm Show banquet.

Other officers elected to serve a one-year term include: Paul Slayton of Falklands Farm, Schellsburg, vice president; Sam Hunter of Smithsburg, Maryland, treasurer; and Sheila Miller, Deutschland Farm, Womelsdorf, secretary.

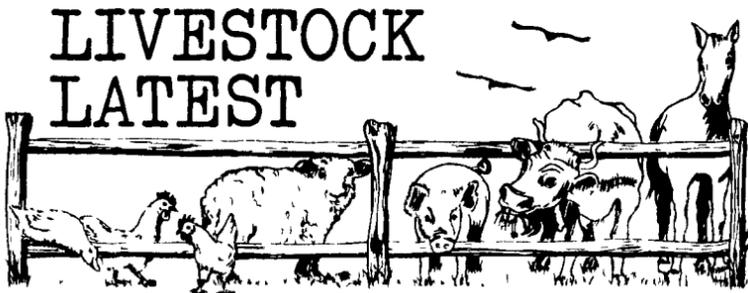
Members elected to serve as directors on the association's 15-member board include: Mike Egleston of Egleston's Polled Hereford Farm, Elkland; George Metzler of Salunga Acres, Mount Joy; Faith Peterson of Spring Run Farm, Abbottstown; and Eugene Stockdale of Stockdale Hereford Farm, Dayton.

According to Midla, the association has a busy year in store. "We will be hosting a field day at one of our member's farms sometime this summer, and we

will be sponsoring a sale in the near future," Midla said. "We're looking forward to hosting a Standard of Perfection Show during the Keystone International Livestock Exposition this coming October. The prestigious show will be held Sunday, Oct. 4. A reception at the Sheraton East in Harrisburg will be held Saturday evening before the show, at which time we

will pay special tribute to two outstanding Polled Hereford breeders in Pennsylvania."

Midla noted the association welcomes new members. For more information about the association and its services, or the new directory, contact Sheila Miller, secretary, R.D. 1 Box 325, Womelsdorf, PA 19567; telephone 215/589-5617.



## Beef Briefs

by  
**Chester D. Hughes**

Lancaster Co.  
Extension Livestock Specialist




## Keystone Pork Congress

UNIVERSITY PARK - The ninth annual Keystone Pork Congress will be held Feb. 19, 1987 at the Penn Harris Motor Inn in Camp Hill. This year's KPC will feature a trade show with more than 40 exhibits, a "Pork Bowl" contest for 4-H and FFA members, educational seminars, an "Ask the Specialist" session, and the annual banquet of the Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council. Featured speakers on the educational program include Art Leman, Illinois pork producer, and Eric Wowra, manager of a producer-owned packing plant. For programs contact your county extension office. For banquet reservations call Stephen Burkholder (215) 682-2871.

### PRODUCER'S PROGRAM Thursday, February 19 Main Ballroom

- 8:00 a.m. Registration - Doors open to Trade Show  
**Morning Session:**  
**Chairman - Kenneth Kephart**
- 9:50 a.m. Hog Market Outlook  
**H. Louis Moore**
- 10:45 a.m. Management to Obtain Future Profits  
**Art Leman**
- 11:30 a.m. NPPC Programs, National Pork Council Representative  
**Afternoon Session:**  
**Chairman - Clyde Myers**
- 1:30 p.m. A Practical and Painless Record-Keeping Approach  
**Michael Miller**
- 2:00 p.m. Is Dust a Hazard in Hog Houses?  
**Daniel Meyer**
- 2:30 p.m. Will a Producer-Owned Packing Plant Work?  
**Eric Wowra**
- 3:30 p.m. Ask the Specialist  
**Kenneth Kephart**  
**Daniel Meyer**  
**Michael Miller**

### PORK COUNCIL WOMEN'S PROGRAM

- Thursday, February 19  
**Keystone E Room**  
**Morning Session:**  
**Mollie Gelse, Presiding**
- 10:00 a.m. Business Meeting
- 10:30 a.m. Flower Demonstration  
**Ray Grumbine**
- Afternoon Session:**
- 12:30 p.m. Jr. Public Speaking Contest
- 2:30 p.m. Will a Producer-Owner Packing Plant Work?  
**Eric Wowra**

### KEYSTONE PORK BOWL Thursday, February 19

- Keystone D Room**  
**Kenneth Winebark, Presiding**
- 9:30 a.m. Preliminary Eliminations
- 2:00 p.m. Final Eliminations

### CONGRESS BANQUET February 19, 6:00 p.m.

- Master of Ceremonies . . . . H. Louis Moore
- Speaker . . . . . Scott McKain

## Time To Think Grazing Management

Livestock producers often pay more attention to their livestock than to their pastures and hayland. Less attention to pastures and hayland is not necessarily due to lack of interest, but a result of a lack of information in a useable form concerning the basic concepts of grass growth and development. The livestock producer must understand that the plants he produces are no more complex than the animals he produces. A basic understanding of both plant and animal biology is critical to the success of today's livestock grazing enterprise.

Animals graze anytime forage is available. Therefore, there is no such thing as NO grazing management. Grazing is either done by design when controlled by a knowledgeable manager or by default when animals are allowed to graze without regard for plant and animal requirements. Remember, when grazing animals are forced to consume a forage of low quality or plants that are not palatable, their intake declines causing reduced performance. Repeated uncontrolled grazing will result in selective consumption of highly nutritious and palatable plants. The desirable plants will disappear from the pasture while the undesirable plants increase.

Grazing management must be designed with both plant growth and animal performance in mind. Maintaining a balance between plant and animal requirements is difficult, but necessary.

There are three fundamental processes that have an effect on the plant during grazing:

1. The grazing animal will either clip or tear off selected plant parts.
2. Plants are trampled and can suffer some mechanical damage.
3. Foulings (manure and urine) will occur.

All of these are part of the grazing process, but defoliation is probably the most important from the standpoint of effect on the plant

as well as its direct effect on the animal. Understanding the defoliation process is important, since the predictability of the defoliation process is an integral part of any grazing management program.

Livestock are very selective in their choice of plants and will consume the most palatable plant parts first. A seed mixture should contain plants with similar palatability and growth form. If a less palatable grass is included in a mixture with palatable species, the less palatable grass will soon dominate the pasture as a result of selective grazing.

It is also important to remember that energy reserves increase in crowns during the latter part of the growing season and buds for next years tillers develop. Consequently, severe defoliation near the end of the growing season will reduce the production of crown tissue and cause a decline in forage production the following year. On occasion, it may be necessary to intensively graze a pasture late in the season. If the grass has been properly managed in previous years, it will recover from this late season grazing; however, the same pasture should not be the last pasture grazed the following year.

Successful livestock production cannot be accomplished by ignoring either plant or animal requirements. It will require several kinds of forages, several pastures and a grazing plan. A livestock producer must visit his pastures frequently to not only check the livestock, but to also check on the grasses to see how they are doing. Try to anticipate what is happening with the grasses and correct any potential problem before it is apparent in livestock performance.

It is time now to think of pasture and hayland management. Before you know it the snow will be gone and new grasses will begin a new grazing season.