

### Whither Goes Pennsylvania Agriculture?

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Statistics are dull, uninteresting and fuzzy. Right? Wrong. If statistics are generated by official reliable government agencies such as our Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service (formerly known as Crop Reporting) and our Census of Agriculture (the U.S. Department of Commerce), such statistics are the most reliable and trustworthy anywhere. Sure they're not perfect but, then, you and I aren't perfect either.

Statistics help us understand what has happened, what is happening and they give us some good clues as to what might happen in the future. Statistics can even help us understand the why of what is going on, and, naturally, statistics help us in our farming and personal decision-making.

Statistics help generate facts and knowledge that we hear about and read about and, consciously or not, sift in our minds along with our individual and collective experiences and observations. It's getting more and more difficult to make correct decisions by relying mostly on our own (limited) and others (biased) experience and observations because we are only a tiny part of what's going on, and because quite a lot of the significant factors in decision-making are beyond our control and outside of our influence.

#### Recent Pennsylvania Doings

Looking at Pennsylvania from a big picture standpoint (no details

or specifics within the crops and livestock subcategories) the following page was swiped from our PA Agricultural Statistics Service "1986 Crops and Livestock Annual Summary." It is page 57. (Get your copy from PASS, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408 or phone 717-787-3904).

First off, notice that all commodities increased in value from \$3.012 billion cash receipts in 1983 to \$3.090 billion cash receipts in 1984 to \$3.150 billion cash receipts in 1985. Pennsylvania's cash receipts from agricultural products increased a little each year. We emphasized the accompanying table's value is not net income or is not total value but just the cash receipts value from agricultural product sales.

Further, notice a decline in cash receipts' value of livestock products from 1983 to 1985, and, a decline in the share of livestock products (73.8 percent to 69.3 percent). On the other side of the coin, crops' cash receipts and share of the total increased from 1983 to 1985 (26.2 percent to 30.7 percent). Where were the biggest crops' cash receipts' gains? Corn topped the list (2.7 percent to 5.6 percent) and next was greenhouse/nursery (7.2 percent to 8.8 percent) followed by apples (1.4 percent to 1.9 percent).

All of the foregoing is merely a brief (three-year overview slice of goings-on, or, trends. Other statistics and studies put the "meat on the bones" and help farmers and others decide what has been going on, is going on, and what the future might hold for them.

### PENNSYLVANIA: CASH RECEIPTS FROM SALE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS FROM FARMS BY COMMODITIES, 1983-1985<sup>1/</sup>

Commodity	1983		1984		1985	
	Value	Percent Of Total	Value	Percent Of Total	Value	Percent Of Total
	Thous. Dols.	Percent	Thous. Dols.	Percent	Thous. Dols.	Percent
ALL COMMODITIES	3,012,316	100.0	3,090,100	100.0	3,149,980	100.0
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS	2,222,559	73.8	2,242,027	72.6	2,183,827	69.3
MEAT ANIMALS	431,942	14.3	441,157	14.3	399,582	12.7
Cattle/Calves	310,882	10.3	303,701	9.8	294,681	9.4
Hogs	118,363	3.9	133,953	4.3	102,086	3.2
Sheep/Lambs	2,697	.1	3,503	.1	2,815	.1
DAIRY PRODUCTS	1,330,863	44.2	1,305,705	42.3	1,311,305	41.6
Milk Wholesale	1,262,100	41.9	1,250,305	40.5	1,251,705	39.7
Milk Retail	68,763	2.3	55,400	1.8	59,600	1.9
POULTRY AND EGGS	421,525	14.0	448,653	14.5	417,155	13.2
Eggs	230,838	7.7	255,660	8.3	218,808	6.9
Broilers	117,833	3.9	121,006	3.9	123,294	3.9
Turkeys	60,724	2.0	64,782	2.1	67,450	2.1
Chickens, Farm	12,130	.4	7,205	.2	7,603	.2
MISCELLANEOUS LIVESTOCK	38,229	1.3	46,512	1.5	55,785	1.8
Wool	291	*	462	*	285	*
Other Livestock	37,938	1.3	46,050	1.5	55,500	1.8
CROPS	789,757	26.2	848,073	27.4	966,153	30.7
FOOD GRAINS	23,790	.8	23,659	.8	25,359	.8
Wheat	23,028	.8	22,947	.7	24,610	.8
Rye	762	*	712	*	749	*
FEED CROPS	164,403	5.5	160,809	5.2	256,523	8.1
Corn	81,889	2.7	66,533	2.2	176,429	5.6
Hay	70,112	2.3	82,689	2.7	68,136	2.2
Oats	9,051	.3	5,944	.2	7,301	.2
Barley	3,351	.1	5,643	.2	4,657	.1
TOBACCO	20,436	.7	21,219	.7	20,984	.7
OIL CROPS	23,409	.8	30,284	1.0	29,561	.9
VEGETABLES	70,258	2.3	80,193	2.6	77,704	2.5
Potatoes	29,256	1.0	31,108	1.0	28,229	.9
Tomatoes	16,279	.5	17,020	.6	16,093	.5
Corn, Sweet	10,103	.3	15,477	.5	13,880	.4
Beans, Snap	1,568	.1	2,822	.1	3,196	.1
Miscellaneous Vegetables	13,052	.4	13,766	.4	16,306	.5
FRUITS AND NUTS	81,949	2.7	88,087	2.9	88,794	2.8
Apples	41,818	1.4	51,023	1.7	59,360	1.9
Peaches	15,590	.5	16,173	.5	9,739	.3
Grapes	10,596	.4	8,484	.3	7,375	.2
Strawberries	5,810	.2	4,146	.1	3,473	.1
Cherries	5,048	.2	3,411	.1	2,206	.1
Pears	687	*	950	*	641	*
Miscellaneous Fruits & Nuts	2,400	.1	3,900	.1	6,000	.2
ALL OTHER CROPS	405,512	13.5	443,822	14.4	467,228	14.8
Greenhouse/Nursery	216,130	7.2	244,434	7.9	277,720	8.8
Mushrooms	187,305	6.2	196,488	6.4	185,758	5.9
Other Field Crops	2,077	.1	2,900	.1	3,750	.1

<sup>1/</sup> Percentages may not be accurate to 0.1 in last digit because of method of machine computation.

\* Less than 0.05 percent.

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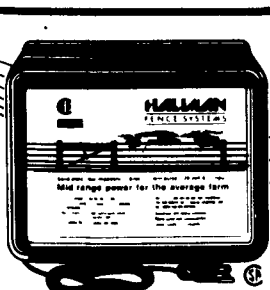
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