

Capons Increasing In Popularity

By Herbert C. Jordan
Penn State

Few people called for information on capon production before 1972. Then the Arab oil embargo came and people began to get information on how to grow capons, how to caponize and how to market capons. The two factors of high energy cost and capons may or may not be related.

A slow but steady increase continues today. An estimated 700 people grow capons in Pennsylvania today compared to about 300 in 1972. Last year, 50 more joined the industry, mostly with small flocks.

A statewide capon conference was held in 1987 and 1988. Another conference is slated for 1990. 4-H capon clubs are growing modestly statewide. Most requests to enter the capon production industry come from adults. Reasons given for begin-

ning as a grower are:

- Capon meat is more flavorful and tender.
- Capons do not crow or make much noise, therefore can be kept in town.
- Capons (true capons) do not fight or scratch much so ready-to-cook (RTC) carcasses may have more grade A's than turkeys, broilers or roasters.
- Capons are gentle enough for children to care for and seldom weigh more than a mother can pick up.
- Fifteen pounds live weight is about as much as normal capons weigh, if sold before 18 weeks of age when the most net income is earned. Many live capons weigh 11-13 pounds at market time.
- Capons seldom flog, peck or scratch children. In fact, they are so gentle they sometimes will brood or care for baby chicks.
- Capon sells for \$1.50-\$2.00

per pound RTC and may sell for much more if smoked. This price may create net income for able managers.

• Surgical capons are in more demand than chemical capons (1959-1987) used to be. Chemically induced caponization was banned in 1987.

• Once caponized, cockerels, as capons, get much fatter at a much earlier age than roasters for chefs who like to bake, cook or fry with chicken fat.

• Nutritional health advocates who refuse to eat much sugar or sweets turn to fat for energy and capons fed a chemical-free diet produce lots of (low) residue or residue free fat.

• Learning to caponize from county agents is an opportunity 4-H members still have in at least 10 counties in Pennsylvania, and once it is learned the child feels as

confident as a graduate surgeon for this one task.

If the number of capons and

owners continues to increase, Pennsylvania may lead the nation in capons.

Nominations Being Accepted For Sheep Industry Awards

DENVER, CO — Nominations are open for three sheep industry awards to be given at the American Sheep Industry Convention, January 14-17, 1990.

The McClure Silver Ram Award will be presented to a sheep producer who has made a substantial contribution through service to the American sheep industry's state and national organizations. Nominations should be made for producers who are known as industry leaders.

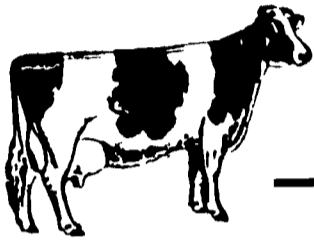
For those indirectly involved in sheep production, nominations can be made for the Campender Award. The award will be presented to someone who has contributed to benefit the industry in a related capacity.

The Flock Guardian Award will be presented to a public, private or

self-employed animal damage control practitioner who has distinguishable leadership skills, interest and dedication to the sheep industry.

Nominations must be submitted before December 1. A black-and-white photo must accompany the application form when possible. Past recipients of the American Sheep Producers Council and National Wool Grower awards are not eligible for the 1990 awards of the American Sheep Industry Association. ASI's executive board will announce the recipients prior to the annual convention.

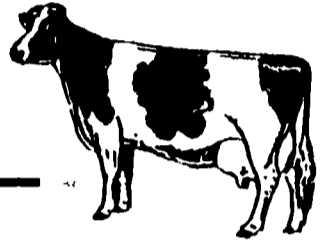
To make an award nomination, contact the American Sheep Industry Association, Award Nomination, 6911 S. Yosemite St., Englewood, CO 80112-1414; 303/771-3500.



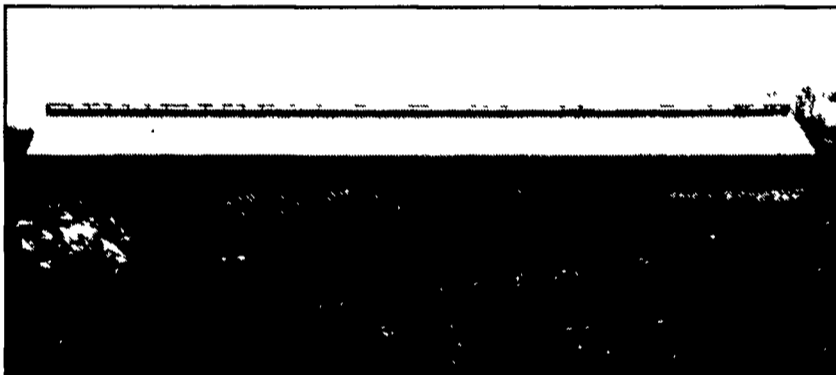
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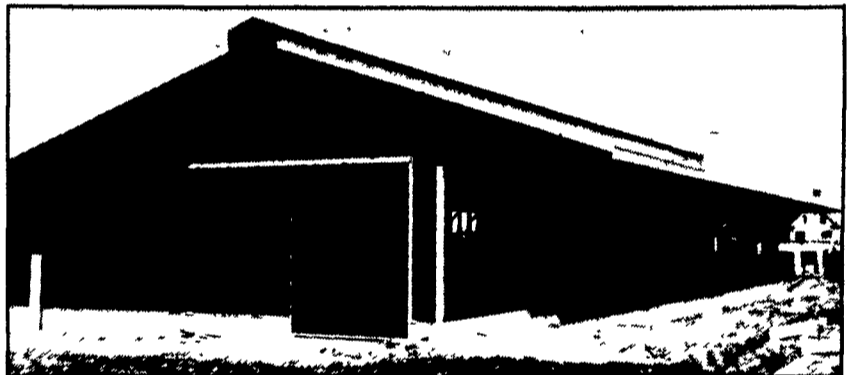
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