

# Beef Economist Predicts

(Continued from Page A1)

more herd expansion is occurring in many markets.

"Exports are going to be huge in 1990 because the Soviets are buying more beef and chicken," he said. "That market is now open. I suppose, with all our surplus chicken, we can ship some of it over there."

### Changes occurring

Moore emphasized the changes occurring in other countries, the low inflation index, increased consumer spending, and other factors contributing to a better year for beef producers in 1990.

"But I'm concerned about certain events, such as the Central Soya and Mitsubishi pork packing plant under construction in Illinois," he said. "I know you knew how much Mitsubishi was into pork production."

Less than 1,000 head of beef cattle are in 70 percent of the plants, and more than 500,000 head are in 1.5 percent of the plants.

Many slaughter houses have been adjusting to this "economy of scale" to get consumers what

they demand and supply them according to the size of the market.

### 'Big 3'

"The 'big 3' slaughterhouse companies kill 75 to 80 percent of



H. Louis Moore, Penn State extension economist, gives his "fearless forecast" at Cattle Feeders Day in Lancaster.



Dr. Bill Henning, Penn State extension red meats specialist, standing, moderates a panel composed of representatives of the meat packers industry. Seated, left to right, are Vernon Trueth, J. W. Trueth & Sons, Inc.; Mike Silverburg, Moyer Packing Co.; Tom Taylor, Taylor Packing Co., Inc.; and Taylor Packing Company consultant Jerry Simmons.

all cattle, and that is alarming for most farmers," said Dr. Bill Henning, Penn State extension red meat specialist.

Excel, IBP, and Conagra now hold a tighter reign on the beef business. IBP is "stronger than ever," Henning said.

"Where I was raised — in Warren County, Illinois — used to be the prime beef cattle market for the U.S.," he said. "But not anymore. The cattle industry moved to the high plains, where most of the beef was raised, and because the cattle

were out there, the slaughter industry moved there."

There were a lot of other factors in the industry move, also. Henning indicated that "smells were not acceptable to the population in the city. People moved out to live in the country, but were not prepared for rural life. Farming agriculture had to modify ways to operate. The resulting lawsuits closed down many businesses."

Changes in industry  
Some of the major changes in



Dr. John Comerford, Penn State extension beef specialist, says farmers should make calf diets more "energy-dense" if they are striving for choice grade.

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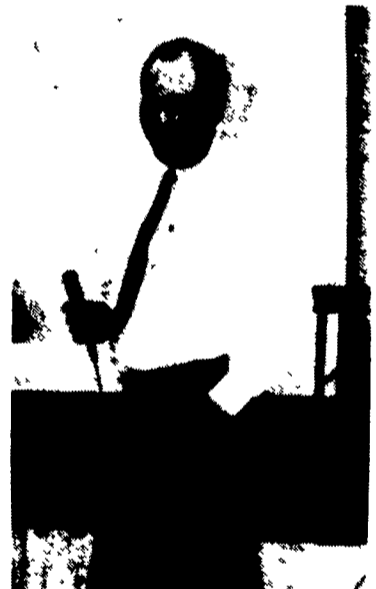
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Karl Hess, a southern Lancaster County veal farmer, says the first 4 to 12 hours of a calf's life are "crucial" to their survival. Hess blames high mortality rates on breeder "partying" and consequent neglect over the holiday season.

the beef industry are the big decline in the number of dairy farms, the increase in the number of large swine, the fewer number of cattle on feed, the fewer amount of food processors, and major changes in consumer tendencies. "The 'quick-n-easy' small-portion markets have increased by 40 percent," he said. "The easy meals, already packaged, show we have a changing society."

The industry is trying to change the attitude that "beef is expensive." Public opinion is beginning to create a positive outlook for beef producers, despite existing problems for packers.

One of the problems packers have is trying to get loyal workers. In addition, wages are always an issue in the meat packer industry. "Ten times more people prefer white-collar jobs," Henning said.

(Turn to Page A46)