

Agricultural Groups Support NAFTA

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The majority of Pennsylvania's agricultural groups now support or promise to work to ensure fair trade under the North American Free Trade Agreement, which is set to go into effect Jan. 1.

The three-nation North American content agreement sets up perhaps the strongest trading coalition within the Western hemisphere, and seeks to eliminate 90 percent of

all tariffs on trade between Canada, Mexico and the United States during the next 15 years.

Proponents of the agreement contend that creating a free trade agreement with neighboring countries could lessen discrepancies in relative values of products and commodities within the three economies, making trading less uneven and opening markets in Mexico and Canada for the U.S. and likewise for the other two partners.

They also predict an improvement in the control and handling of hazardous waste in Mexico, an improvement in the economic outlook for Mexican workers and thus a reduction in the flow of illegal immigration into the U.S. which competes with local unskilled labor, and better trade relations with Canada.

While less heard as an argument for NAFTA, some have said that creating a three-nation trading alliance in the Western hemisphere would create a formidable power to equalize the multi-country trad-

ing alliance of the European Community, and counter trade imbalances between the EC and independent countries in the West.

Because of a failure between the U.S. and the EC on agricultural and other trading subsidies, the international General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has been unresolved after seven years of talks.

A deadline on settling GATT is nearing, but the influence that NAFTA may have at the GATT bargaining table could not be determined by presstime.

Opponents to the NAFTA agreement have said — some more strongly than others — that it would cause domestic economic turmoil.

Citing fears of undercutting domestic prices of domestic products because of lower average labor costs in Mexico, and also predicting that U.S. manufacturers would abandon U.S. manufacturing sites to set up operations in Mexico because of labor costs, national labor unions, some politi-

cians and some farm organizations had called for a rejection of NAFTA.

Others have rejected the pact because of fears of a loss of sovereignty over labor, environmental and other issues tied into the multi-national trade agreement.

However, as of this past week, the national legislatures of all three countries have approved the pact, setting the stage for the Jan. 1 start of the agreement, which ideally is to set up a course for a gradual equalization of trade, environmental and labor discrepancies between the three countries.

The approval in the U.S. was heralded by the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, which had supported its passage.

"The economic well-being of the U.S. agriculture is dependent on expanding market opportunities. Mexico is a case in point," NFC President Wayne Boutwell said last week in a news release.

"In just the past few years, it has become our third largest export market and today accounts for

nearly 10 percent of total U.S. agricultural exports."

According to the news release, "Approval of NAFTA ... will not only help maintain U.S. access to this important market, but provide for future growth opportunities."

According to the news release, "U.S. agricultural exports under NAFTA are projected to more than double over the next 15 years, reaching \$10 billion or more annually."

In the statement, Boutwell is quoted as having said, "Such increased exports will help strengthen farm income, generate billions of dollars of additional economic activity, and create as many as 150,000 new jobs. Clearly, U.S. agriculture, including farmer cooperatives, will benefit as a result of the approval of NAFTA."

In a switch in its position on NAFTA, the National Farmers Organization said in a recent statement that it now supports the proposal, because it has been approved by the U.S. Congress.

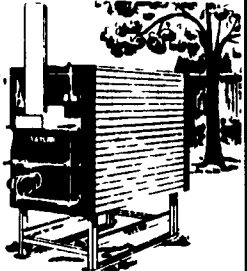
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New Holland Dairy
New Holland Sales Stables
Wednesday, November 24, 1993
Report supplied by auction

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BETTER FRESH COWS 1215.00-1435.00.
HERD 33 HEAD ALL STAGES 880.00-1585.00.
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SMALL OPEN HEIFERS 330.00-500.00.
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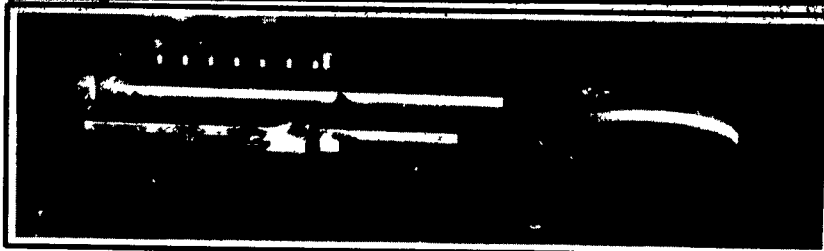
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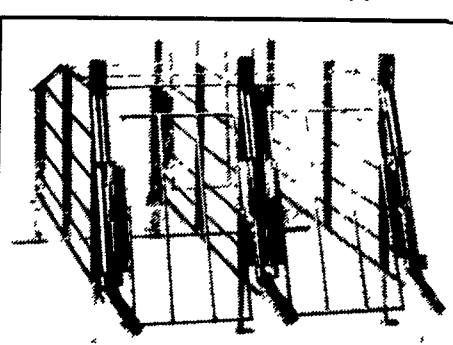
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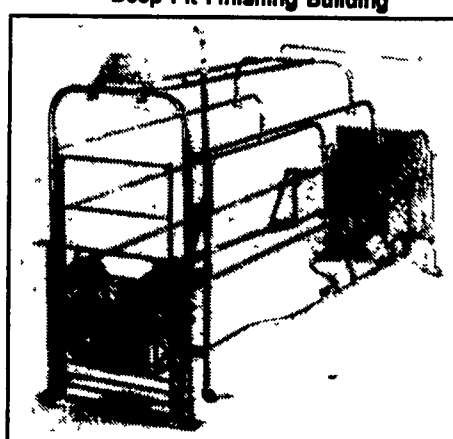
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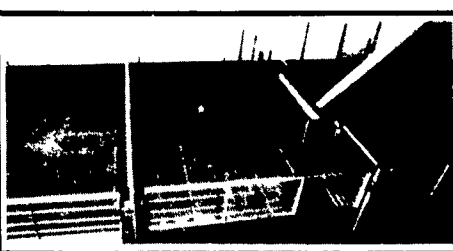
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