

Farmer panel from left, Brad Hollabaugh, Roger Garber, Cliff Hawbacker,

Ted Hass, University of Maryland, chair, Jonathan Quinn, and Steve Groff.

Internet Meeting Has Good Interest

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)
— The Ag Computing and Electronics Expo that was held Wednesday, drew more than 200 of the top farmers from several states to learn how to farm with computers and use the Internet to communicate with other farmers and research topics of personal and business interest.

The participants paid \$75 each (early registry was \$55) to choose from a smorgasbord of topics and review commercial offerings of

programs and equipment offered for sale at the trade show. Subjects included computer lingo, developing web pages, nutrient management, and farm management programs. For an additional \$25 you could get hands-on experience from a local training center.

Because the expo was so successful, John Vogel, editor of Pennsylvania Farmer, chief sponsor of the event, said plans are already developing to expand the program next year. In addition to the computer technology, the planning

committee is thinking about incorporating additional areas of interest such as precision farming.

Sponsors for this year's event included Nutrient Solutions in Agriculture, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

In the evening program a group of farmers formed a panel to explain how they use computers to make their operations more profitable. These farmers use their computers to keep track of dairy rations, keep the farm books, man-

age their fields, keep track of markets, order machinery parts, or make other buying transactions, and surf the Internet for agricultural information.

While all of the participants in the panel were supporters of the computer in agriculture, some were quick to point out that it takes time and you must keep the records accurate and up-to-date in the computer just like in your grandfather's "shoe box" method of accounting. Not all the farmers even thought

computers made their operation more profitable. But it is a tool to be used like any other tool to stay up-to-date and become more efficient.

The farmer panel included Steve Groff, vegetable and grain producer from Holtwood; Roger Garber, a grain and poultry producer from Mount Joy; Cliff Hawbacker, dairy farmer from Chambersburg; Brad Hollabaugh, fruit grower from Biglerville; and Johathan Quinn, grain farmer from Warwick, Md.

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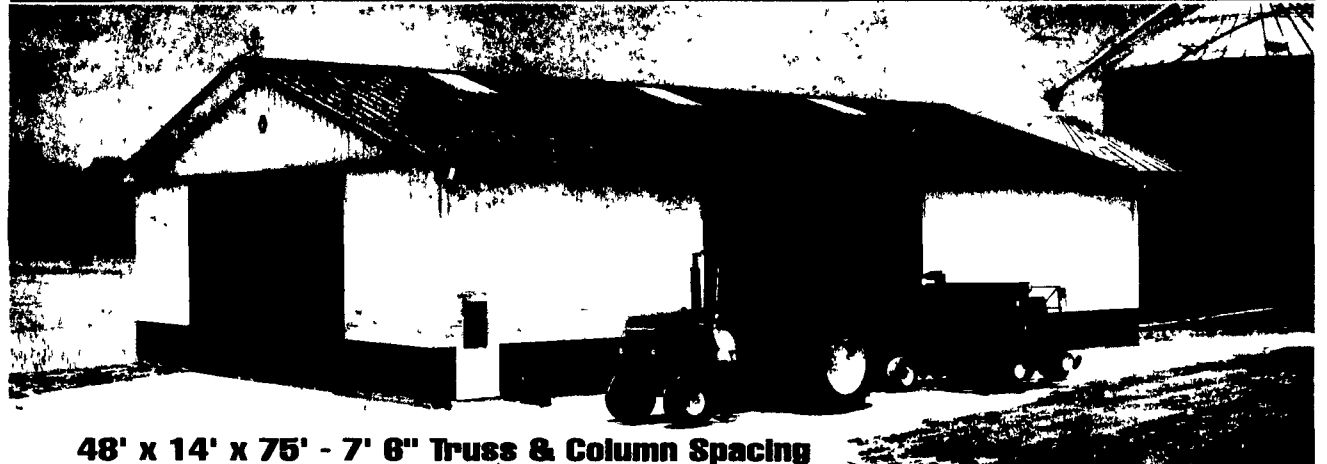
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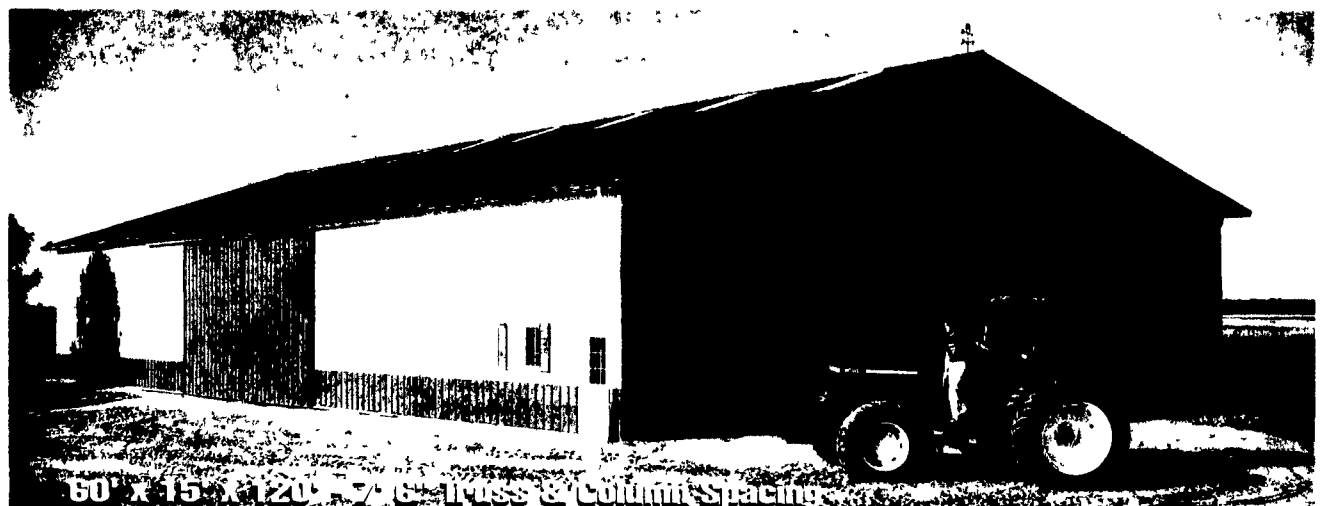
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