

Business Celebrates 100-Year Anniversary

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Since 1899 when Amos H. Hoffman first began producing a quality wheat seed for Pennsylvania farmers, Hoffman seeds has focused on helping growers produce profitable, high-yielding crops. At a banquet to celebrate their 100th anniversary with 250 guests at the Lancaster Host Motel and Conference Center Tuesday night, Ivan Kaufman, a long time employee gave a slide presentation of the history of the company. The Hoffman farm near Landisville where it all started was in the family in the early 1800's. Because millers needed quality grain, the Hoffman's started to produce seed to satisfy this need. At the time more than 300 grist mills, run by water power, were located within a 35 mile area in Lancaster County.

In the early 1900's oats and potatoes were added to the fall catalog. At the time, the Colorado potato beetle had almost wiped out the U.S. potato crop so the Hoffmans got involved to provide seed potatoes to fill the need to replenish the potato stock. By 1910 grass seed was added. And of course seed corn became a specialty.

Morris Kauffman, who began working for the company in 1935 and retired about 12 years ago, recalled that in the beginning all the corn was open pollinated. Only in 1939 did hybrid corn come on the market. "Hybrid corn became right for the mechanical equipment that was being developed at the time," Morris said. "And of course, yields more than doubled in a short period of time."

Through the years, Hoffman Seeds continued to grow with products being offered into expanded markets in the Midwest. Corn and soybeans are particularly sold in large volume. Today, a long term relationship with Novartis Seeds, Hoffman produces, markets, and distributes Novartis Seeds' full NK Brand product line in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic including corn, alfalfa, soybeans and wheat. The new technology

capabilities has brought Hoffman a full line of value-added products that have been developed in their extensive research and testing programs.

George Ewing, Jr., chairman of the board, was in charge of the meeting. Special sales awards were presented. Louis Moore, Penn State specialist, well-known for his grasp of the marketing and production trends, was the guest speaker.

Pennsylvania Farmers Union Calls For Support Lifting Loan Caps

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Because it's the best way to bring meaningful relief to the region's farmers, Robert Junk, State President of the Pennsylvania Farmers Union, is calling on area producers to support legislation in Congress to eliminate the caps on commodity marketing loans rates.

The loan rates, capped at 1995 levels under the 1996 farm law, set an artificially low floor for commodity prices, leaving producers more vulnerable to price fluctuations. Legislation pending in Congress would lift the caps and extend the duration of the loan period from the current nine to 15 months. Both changes would give producers price protection and improve marketing flexibility.

"For producers being squeezed by depressed commodity prices,

weather disasters, crop disease and rising production costs, removing the caps is the single best way to provide meaningful relief," said Robert Funk.

Lifting the caps would immediately increase loan rates by about 60 cents a bushel for wheat, 32 cents a bushel for corn, and 30 cents a bushel for soybeans. For example, by removing the caps:

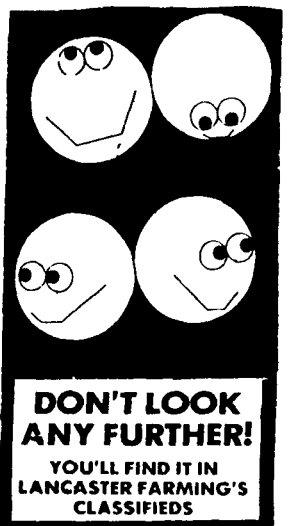
- A wheat producer with 1,000 acres, yielding 30 bushels per acre, would receive an additional \$18,000 in revenue this year.
- A corn farmer with 700 acres and a 125-bush-per-acre yield would receive an additional \$28,000 in revenue this year.
- A soybean farmer with 500 acres and a 40-bushel-per-acre yield would receive an additional \$6,000 in revenue this year.



At the 100th anniversary celebration are from left, George Ewing, Jr., Morris Kauffman, and Ivan Kaufman.

"Washington is divided about how to best help America's farmers and ranchers, and time is running short," Robert Junk said. "We need to send a clear message to our elected representatives that we support removing the caps and that they should too. Pick up your phone and call and ask your senators and member of Congress to support lifting the caps."

Producers can contact their senators and member of Congress through the Capitol operator at 202-224-2131. For more information, call National Farmers Union at 1-877-4NO-CAPS (1-877-466-2277)



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