

# You're Saving The Planet

(Continued from Page A25)

## Economic Outlook

Milt Madison, economist with the USDA-FSA, noted that in 1999 the per-capita consumption of poultry increased by five pounds, making it the largest increase ever seen in the broiler industry, he said. "It's the biggest increase we've ever had in young chicken consumption."

Every year, for the past 10 years, Madison has noted the industry is poised to see depressed returns and should scale back. Yet production keeps increasing with demand, and the numbers "probably will continue to surprise me and we'll continue to see an increase in production," Madison said.

The economy continues to surge, and with food costing less than 10 percent of income, people can consume "large amounts of protein," said Madison.

Exports in 1999 were down to

15 percent of total production, compared to the mid-'90s highs of 17 percent, Madison noted. In addition, the trend seen in the past five years has been increased retail broiler price spread, a record high. "There's been a tremendous increase in the margins retailers are keeping for themselves in marketing broiler products," noted the economist.

On a whole-bird basis, the industry is doing quite well at this point, he said.

Wholesale net returns for eggs are staying positive, in 1999 at 6 cents per dozen. Prices received are very close to the break-even point, though there have been strong per-capita increases in table egg usage. Per person, more than 10 eggs are being consumed additionally (about 75 egg products and 180 table eggs per person per year).

If grain prices increase, there could be "real problems for profitability in the industry," Madison said.

son said.

## Legislative Agendas, Other Issues

State Sen. Noah Wenger (R-36), noted that of 976 concentrated animal unit operations, 572 are participating under the guidelines established by the Nutrient Management Act, along with 282 volunteers. That equals about 60 percent participation within the first two years of the sign-up program, Wenger noted, "a great tribute."

The State Conservation Commission is working with universities and federal agencies to address runoff controls on the phosphorus issue. If revisions to the state act are necessary, Wenger said, "We believe they can and they will and they must be based on sound science and fact and not on emotionalism and fears," he said.

The state is preserving farms "faster than any other other state in the nation," he told those at the conference. That in-

cludes 1,260 farms on 156,000 acres in 42 counties.

The 100 additional farms to be preserved under Gov. Ridge's Growing Greener Initiative has "people working overtime," said Wenger, to assure its success. The deadline is Earth Day, April 22.

Dr. Robert Elkin, head of poultry science at Penn State, noted that there are only eight poultry science departments left in the U.S. There's only one above the Mason-Dixon line, only one in the Northeast.

Penn State has additional funds that can be used to recruit and retain excellent poultry students, Elkin noted.

The university's poultry science club received the U.S. Poultry Science Club of the Year Award and best scrapbook. A club member was recently elected to a national post "from the smallest poultry science club in the country," Elkin said, with approximately 23 members.

In addition, the department has announced that there is an animal science major, which combines the poultry technology management program with the dairy and animal science major to create the new animal science major.

On April 28, the poultry science club will be conducting their banquet at the university. More information will be available later.



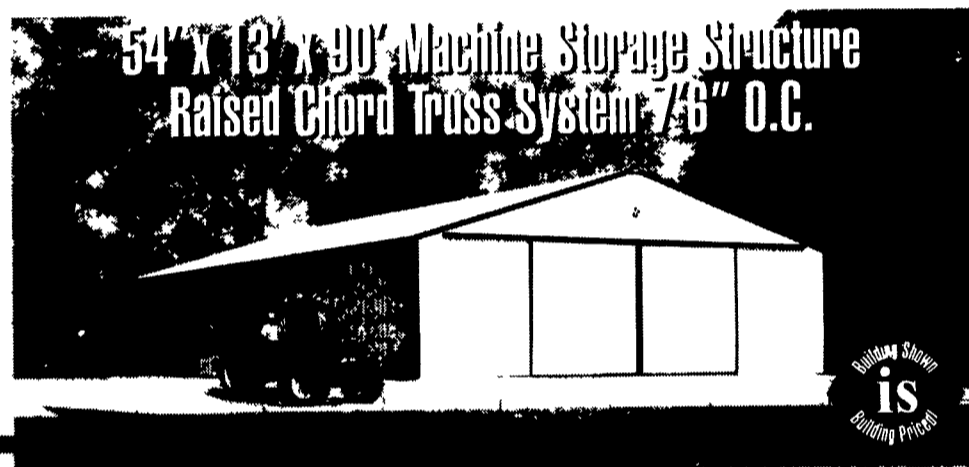
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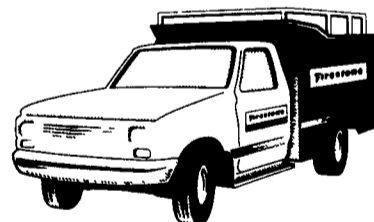
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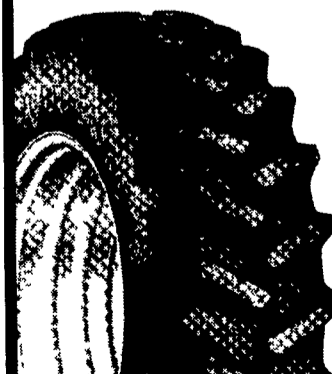
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