

# Local farmers voice discontent

*"If my family wasn't receiving food stamps, we wouldn't be making it," says one local farmer*

By CHRIS DELMASTRO  
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

As 1,700 farmers drove their tractors down the streets of Washington, D.C., the rest of American agriculture, including local farmers, sat back and watched.

Members of an organization known as the American Agricultural Movement staged the protest to persuade Congress to pass the farm legislation which they claim will raise the price farmers receive for corn, wheat and other crops by an estimated two-thirds through the implementation of price supports.

Although local farmers, many of whom till small family-owned plots, might benefit from the legislation, none have joined the movement tracting through Washington.

Blaine Leister, a local farmer, felt the protest was unorganized. "There was no big leader and everyone was unaware of what was going on," he said.

Ed Bickle, another farmer from the State College vicinity, commented on his willingness to join the protestors. He said he lacked the time.

The crop farmer could do it, but most local farmers raise dairy and beef cattle and have to work all year, he said.

Farmers such as these only take part in the protest by watching it on the news or reading about it in the papers. Many of them are unaware of the issues, but feel for the protestors and their cause.

According to Delores Ott, the daughter of a Spring Mills farmer, "The protest is worthwhile. I think something might

come out of it."

"I hope they get something, but the government seems to be against them," Bickle said. "Congress is going to have to raise prices or the farmer won't be able to do it. The rich will buy the farms and that isn't right."

Many of the farmers protesting have gone into farming in recent years and borrowed heavily to acquire expensive land and equipment.

"Those farmers who have just bought the land and have to make payments besides machinery costs are the most distressed," Leister said. "If something isn't done soon they'll all have to quit. They'll be bought out by contractors."

Bickle, who works on his father's farm, must hold down another job to support his family. The reason his family has kept the farm is because they like to work on it. They have been offered a substantial amount for it by a realtor and are considering selling it, he said.

Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland met with the farmers several times last week. "They are good people in considerable trouble," Bergland said, but the farmers want a fundamental change "which we're not prepared to support yet."

The farmer is a consumer too and feels the effect of high food prices. "I don't want prices to be too high," Ott said. "If my family wasn't receiving food stamps, we wouldn't be making it."

"I don't want to see food prices raised in the stores either," Bickle said, "but



Ed Bickle, a farmer from the State College area, said he would have joined in the recent Washington protest if he had been able to spare the time.

my dad got more for wheat 30 years ago than today."

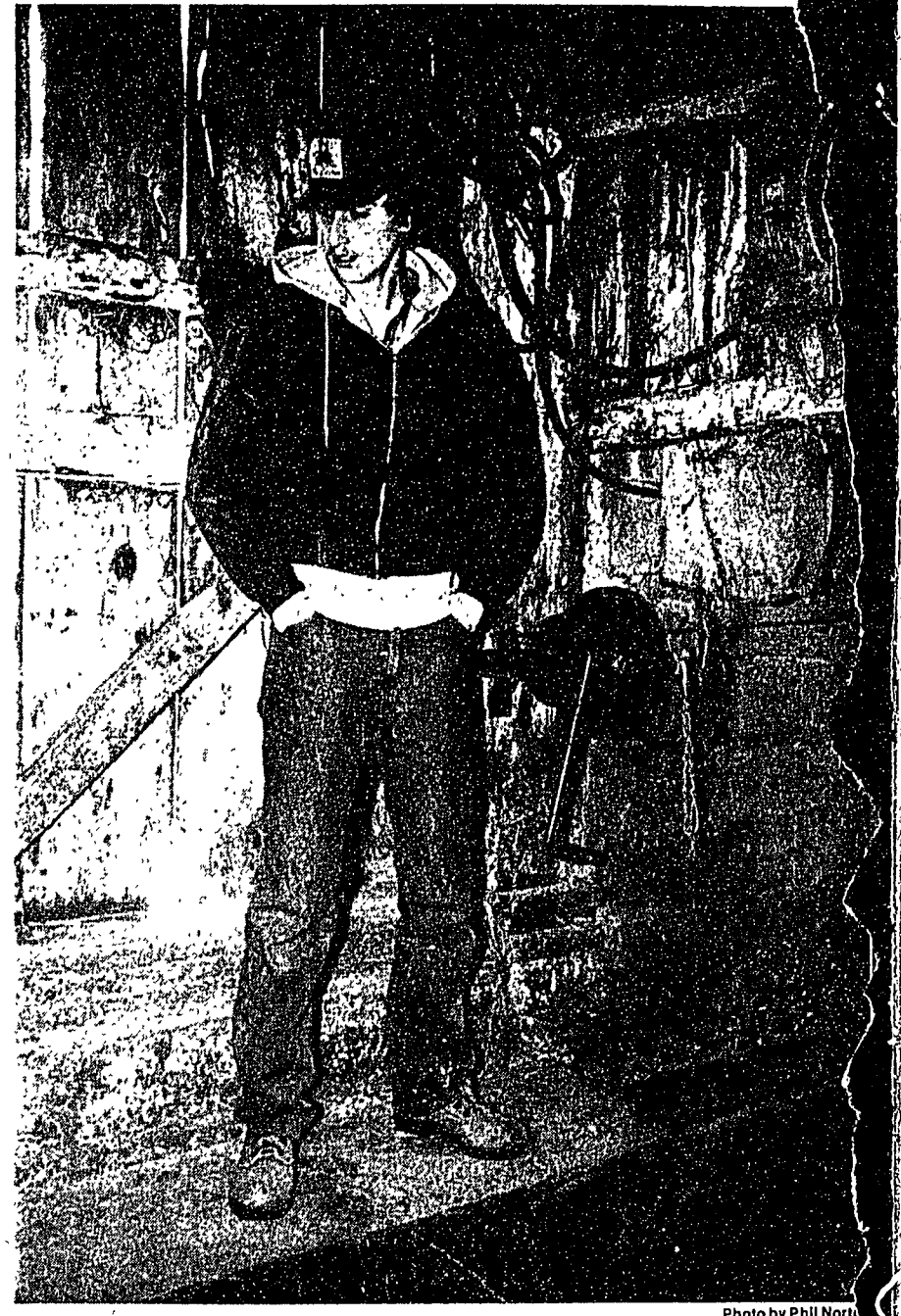
Leister's wife, Alta, said, "I don't blame people for not wanting higher food prices, but the farmer isn't getting it. There is too much of a difference between the producer and the consumer. The implements we must buy are too high for the price we're getting for our crops. The farmer doesn't want everything, just a comparative price."

Leister and his wife were against price supports as the answer to boosting

sagging parity. "I don't believe in getting something for nothing," Leister said. "The farmer should figure out for himself what to plant."

He mentioned an alternative solution being a freeze on prices of consumer goods so the farmer could compete, but he added prices are already too high. Leister, as many of today's farmers, has realized there isn't a simple solution for the immediate future.

"There is no real answer to the farmer's problems," he said.



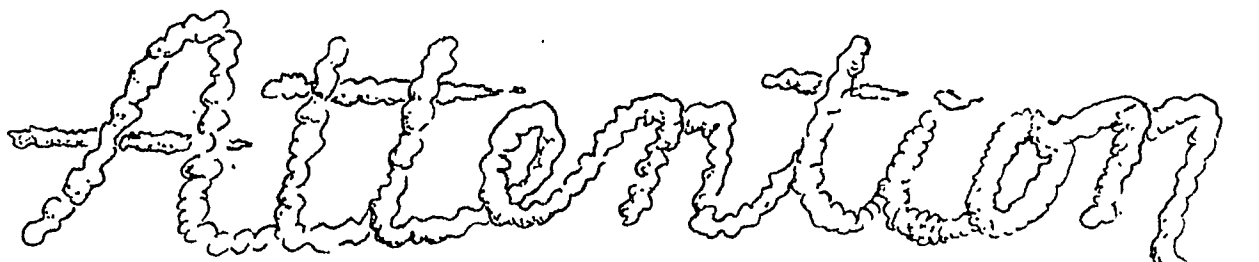
Local farmers did not attend the recent demonstration in Washington, D.C. by an agricultural lobby in support of a bill that would provide price supports for farm products. Although farmer Blaine Leister and other local farmers said they have been hard hit by inflation and favor the bill, none chose to join the protest.

## PENN STATE OPEN POWERLIFTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

10:30 am  
4:00 pm

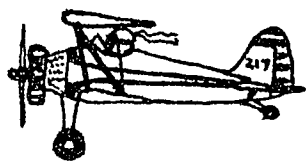
ADMISSION  
\$1.00

FEB 17th  
I.M. BLDG.



the daily **Collegian** office will close at 4 p.m. on Feb. 16 and won't reopen until 9 a.m. on March 5.

Deadline for display advertising for our March 8 issue is Tuesday, March 6 at noon. Deadline for our March 9 issue is Wed., March 7 at 4 p.m. Classified deadline for our first issue is Wed., March 7 at 11 a.m.



### We're Going To Keep On "Freezing" Until The Day of the Irish!

Laurel Glen's "FREEZE ON RENTS" Deadline has been extended to St. Patrick's Day, **MARCH 17, 1979**

Lease an apartment for next September at this year's rates. **No increase** for 1979-80 leases if we receive your application (and security deposit) by March 17th.

Take advantage of our low rates now. And save yourself some **GREEN!**

INCLUDED IN THE RENT:

- All Utilities
- Cable TV Service
- Free Parking
- Wall-To-Wall Carpet
- 24-Hour Emergency Maintenance
- Free Bus Service

Office Hours: 8:30-5:00 Weekdays  
11:00-3:00 Saturdays  
Evening Appointments Available

**LAUREL GLEN**



**APARTMENTS**

10 Vairo Blvd.  
State College, Pa. 16801  
814-237-5351

With the "Luck of the Irish", you too can rent at last year's rates!

Special bonus offer!  
Free \$2.50 bottle  
Samson & Delilah Shampoo  
with styled haircut.  
19th thru 24th  
**REGIS HAIRSTYLISTS**  
Nittany Mall 238-2555

**Knits are News...**  
for spring and texture is everywhere! It's Ladybug's best basics that will make your best dressed look. Start with this V-neck acrylic linen blend cardigan (\$28). A sweater that looks this good could only be Sidney Gould. So look for it at your nearest Ladybug.

**Ladybug**

110 E. College Ave., Shop daily 9:30-5:30, Mon. & Fri. til 9.