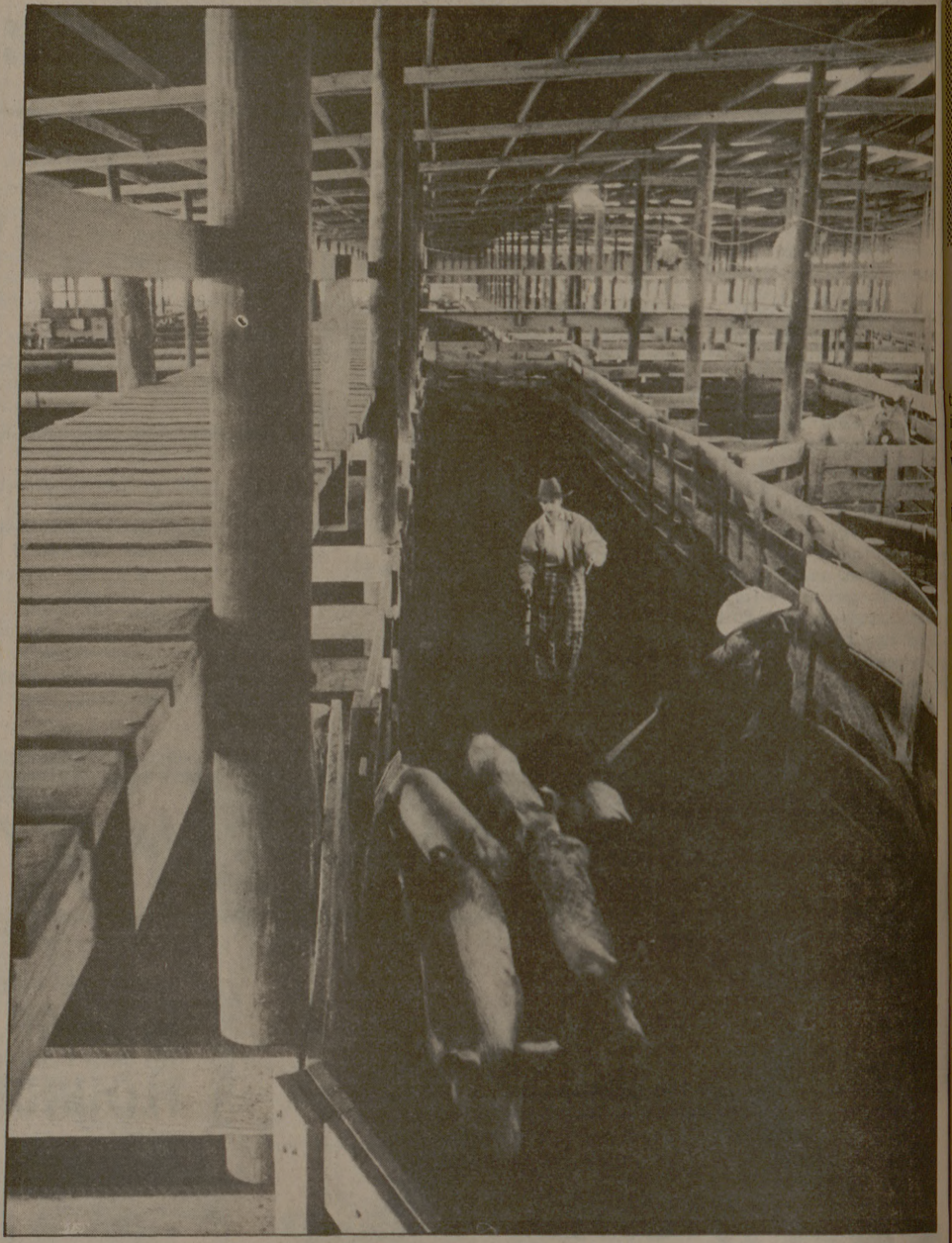


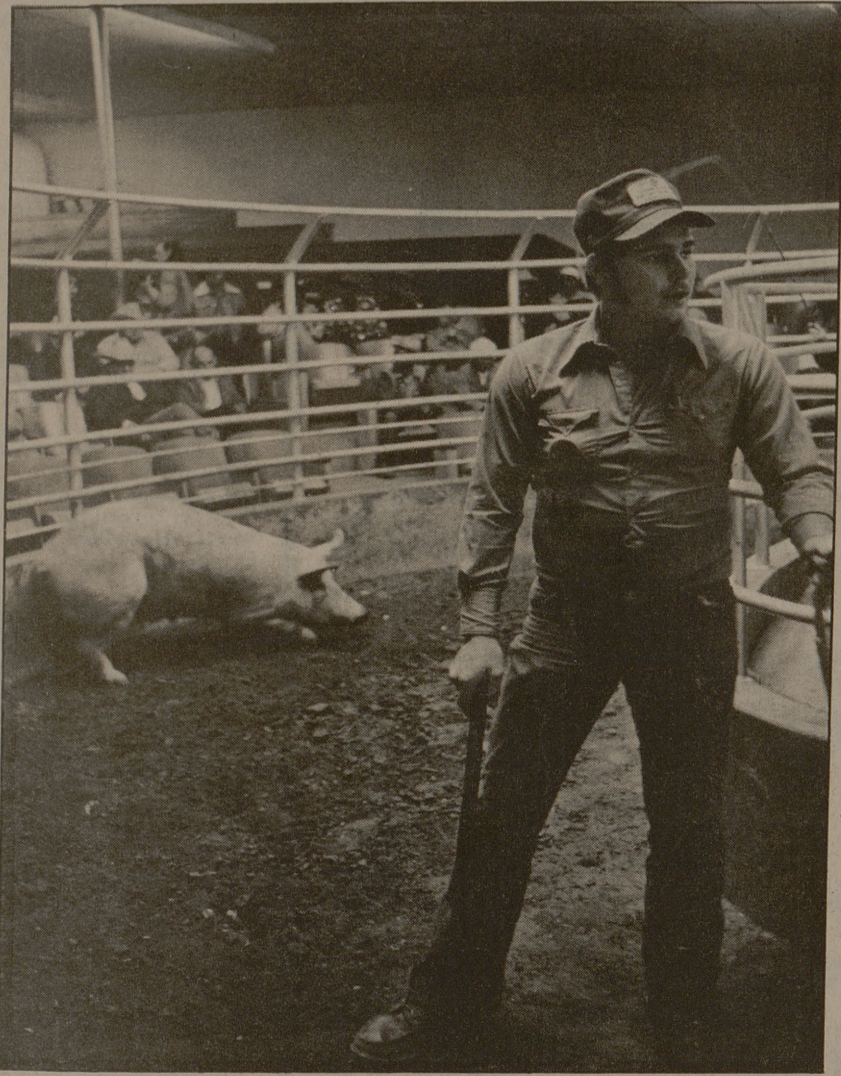


**BUYER STRETCHES OUT AT EDGE OF AUCTION RING**  
Bryan Livestock Commission conducts auction every Tuesday

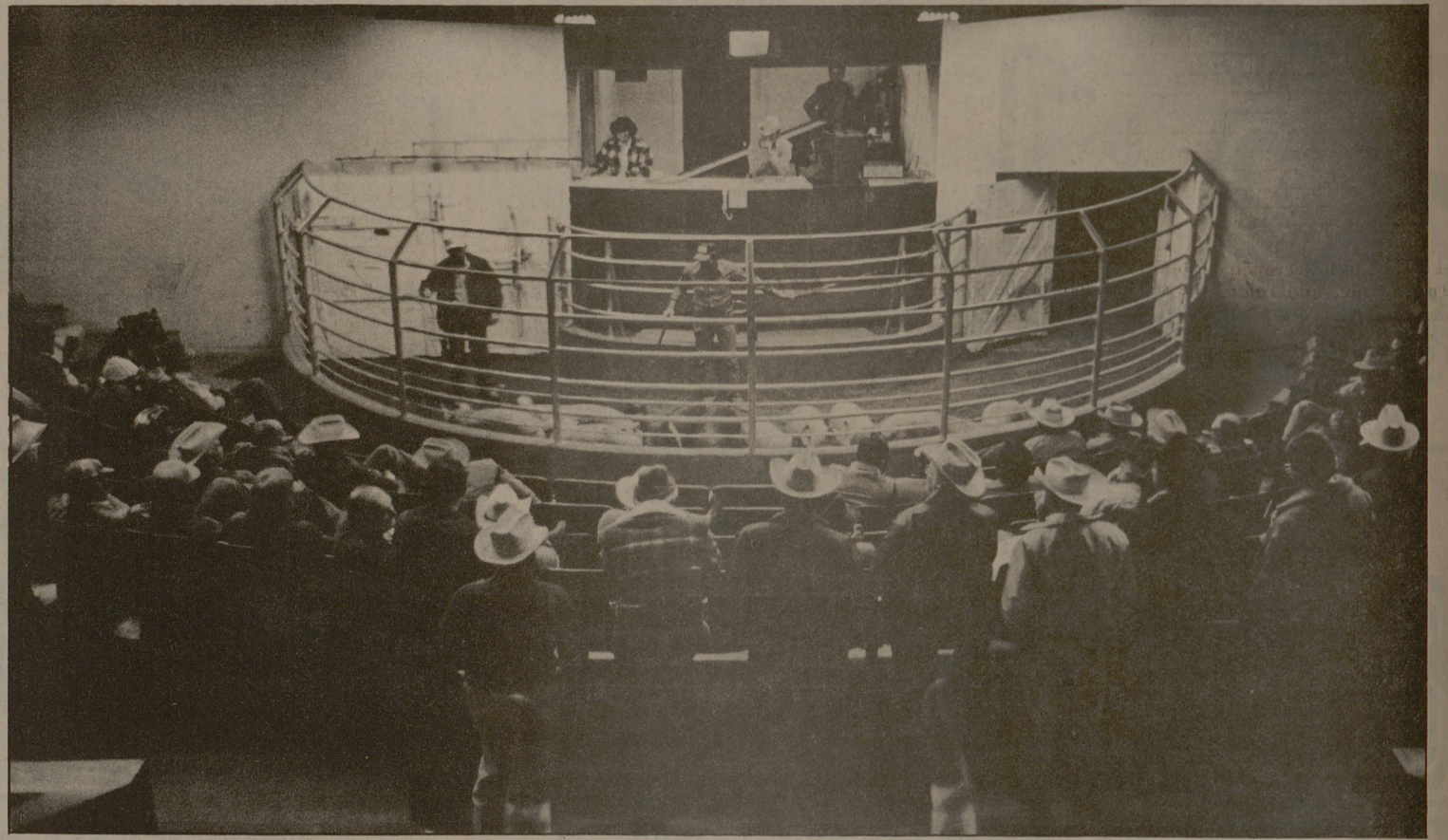


**ATTENDANTS PROD HOGS THROUGH MAZE OF PENS**  
Catwalks "backstage" allow buyers to window shop before bidding

Photos  
by  
Douglas Winship  
and  
Jim Peters



**ATTENDANT IGNORES HOG'S PLEA FOR MERCY**  
Livestock is paraded through auction ring during bidding



**CROWD GATHERS AROUND AUCTION RING TO BID ON HOGS**  
Auctioneers move business along rapidly, a la municipal court

## Livestock auction features hogs, hats

It's as familiar as the pickup truck along Texas roadways. Its long, low building is surrounded by acres of wooden pens. Its large parking lot is empty except one day a week when the dirt expanses are packed with trailers, large-sized sedans and the ubiquitous pickup.

To many Texans the prices quoted inside are far more important than, say, the fluctuating price indexes on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. The animal commodity can also be converted into dinner much more readily.

The Bryan Livestock Commission Co. holds an auction every Tuesday. Located on State Highway 21 east of Bryan, the commission attracts hundreds of hungry buyers eager to scarf up some prime beef, pork or mutton, and sometimes even a swaybacked mare.

The buyers and the curious sit or stand in a semi-circle around a caged staging area where the animals are paraded through. The auctioneer accepts bids from his vantage point above the dirt pit. With some red carpeting, music by the Lettermen,

Bert Parks in the auction booth and some imagination it could well be a beauty contest.

The many head coverings in evidence are a hatter's delight. Most wear the traditional stetson — straw or felt — but there are also homburgs, fedoras, stocking caps, duck hunting hats, print cotton caps, as well as a lonely porkpie. No fezzes or pillbox hats were spotted. The hat is your badge to bid it seems.

Buyers signal their bids by nods, winks or head and arm movements. The auction, like most auctions,

moves quickly.

The "backstage" area — the chutes and corrals — is riotous cacophony of squealing hogs, bawling cattle, and "sooieing" attendants is punctuated by the sharp sound of a wood prod on the side of a hog. The larger animals are treated to more persuasive promises charged by batteries or voltage electrical currents.

While most buyers are inside bidding, other window shop as they meander along the catwalks above the pens.

— Jim Peters



**MOST BUYERS KEEP HAND COCKED FOR BIDDING**  
The omnipresent hats are seemingly their badge to bid



**BIDS ONCE, BIDS TWICE, BEATEN BY A BID**  
While looks could kill, this one didn't; it only expressed disappointment.