

ation

Car dealers fight for survival of the fittest

United Press International
American car dealers are fighting for survival.

Stunned by inflation they are scrambling to scratch out profits and hoping an economic rebound will put the nation's stumbling automotive industry back on the right track.

Double-digit inflation has crippled the nation's automobile dealers making it more expensive to run a showroom at a time when the economic squeeze is forcing many people out of the new car market.

The industry's major problem's got to be inflation, the increased cost of just doing business. Inflation affects us just like everyone else," said Jerry Dahlinger, general sales manager of Swinson Chevrolet in Tulsa, Okla.

Actually, dealers say inflation has hit retail car sales much harder than other businesses.

Jumping interest rates in the last year have doubled the cost of maintaining an inventory of gleaming cars known in the trade floor plan costs. At the same time consumers have become wary of going deep into hock at high interest rates to buy a new car.

Let me put it this way. In 1974, the total floor plan expense for the year was \$14,300. Last month it was \$16,010," said Kevin Coffey, vice president and general manager of Marty R's in Garland, a Dallas suburb.

Automobile sales and housing starts, two industries highly dependent on accessible interest rates, will be the main sources of employment losses in the nation during the coming recession, Economic Forecasting, associated with the Wharton School of Business in Philadelphia, has predicted.

National Automobile Dealers Association President William C. Doenges said dealers are burdened never before by high interest rates on huge stocks of expensive cars which are not selling, and it may boil down to a matter of survival of the fittest.

It takes the very best of every dealer just to make ends meet," he said. The dealers that are on their knees will adjust to this situation, he said.

Even foreign car dealers said they were being hurt. One reason: the surgery, the operation, the operating costs, primarily of cardinals.

Caesarean section, the twins soon opening heart and breathing. They were there Thursday on an emergency arranged by Puerto Rico's Romero.

nous donors have the twins' medical records, Eladio, 31, are unemployed. s alone are estimated.

Caesarean section, the twins soon opening heart and breathing. They were there Thursday on an emergency arranged by Puerto Rico's Romero.

Caesarean section, the twins soon opening heart and breathing. They were there Thursday on an emergency arranged by Puerto Rico's Romero.

Caesarean section, the twins soon opening heart and breathing. They were there Thursday on an emergency arranged by Puerto Rico's Romero.

Caesarean section, the twins soon opening heart and breathing. They were there Thursday on an emergency arranged by Puerto Rico's Romero.

inability to deliver the cars ordered because of heightened small car demand. Another: lost sales when car owners ran into the lack of demand and low prices for large used cars on trade-in.

Several dealers said they were forced to lay off people, but others said they were doing everything possible to avoid layoffs and echoed Dahlinger's feeling that "the truth is we're riding it out. We're not going to cut back any more than we have to."

"Those shiny new cars you see in so many dealer's lots are bought with borrowed money from a bank at interest rates which have gone in a year's time from 8 percent to, in some instances, 16.5 percent," said Thomas McKoean, executive vice president of the New Hampshire Auto Dealers Association.

Most dealers contacted around the nation admitted the high interest rates combined with the higher prices of cars had forced them to reduce their stock.

The high interest rates have had a devastating effect even in areas with a strong economy where the national downturn has not affected consumer sales.

"Our sales have continued to be the same at this dealership, but our costs of keeping inventory and operating costs have just gone skyrocket high," said Richard Rocher, general sales manager at Gene Messer Ford in Lubbock. "Prices of floor plan interests are just outrageous. It's tripled since 1977."

New car sales have also been dam-

pened by the effect of inflation coupled with the plummeting value of large used cars because of the energy crisis.

Inflation alone, however, is not totally responsible for keeping people out of new car showrooms. The tense international situation seems to have also had a profound impact on the buying public, and in turn, the car dealers.

Thomas Hetzel, owner of Memorial AMC-Jeep in Houston, said the mood of the public was a key ingredient in a successful car sales operation.

He said the last recession had little impact on Houston, but the current downturn was being felt.

"In '74, Houston didn't even miss a beat. We are missing a few beats in this one. We've got conservatives from up north who are worried," Hetzel said. "But our economy is so strong and vibrant and so many people are moving in that it has to continue to go on as opposed to the industrialized northern city where there are layoffs and everybody gets scared."

"Milwaukee's my original hometown. It's dead up there. They're not selling anything. It's not the weather up there, it's the people," he said, predicting his lot would double its Jeep sales in 1980.

Surveys by the trade journal Automotive News showed 468 domestic car dealers went under in 1979, a dramatic increase from the 96 which closed their doors in 1978 which approached the record level of 527 which bit the dust in 1975 in the wake of the Arab oil embargo.

Liquid seaweed ups crop yields

United Press International
A new American product emulates the European farmer's longtime use of seaweed to improve crop yield.

William E. Campbell has developed a liquid seaweed concoction for use in the United States. He says it has increased soybean yields from 25 percent to 32 percent over the past three years. He says studies show his product, called Agriblend, can trigger similar increases in other crop yields.

State agriculture officials here agree the product spurs growth but are skeptical that it will do all that Campbell says.

Campbell's product involves Sargassum, a brown algae found in the Atlantic Ocean from North Carolina to Puerto Rico. After harvesting, it is left to dry in the sun and then diluted to make a liquid for spraying on crops.

The result is a product that stimulates growth while nutrifying the soil, he said.

"In seaweed you have over 70 trace elements plus some growth-stimulating enzymes called cytokinins," he said. The seaweed helps open the root system of the plant and thus make it easier for fertilizer to work, he said, while the trace elements restore needed elements growing plants draw from the soil.

Field trials show that when one uses the recommended half gallon of

Agriblend per acre, he said, the increased yields can produce an extra \$50 to \$60 worth of soybeans per acre and another \$200 to \$400 per acre worth of tomatoes.

A Georgia study showed increased peach output plus other benefits, Campbell said. He also said Agriblend helps lower water content in the crop, thus allowing it to stay on the tree longer before rotting.

Campbell said his firm, Beaufort's Aqua-10 Corp., is geared to produce enough Agriblend to treat 500,000 acres. It is carried by 25 distributors through much of the Southeast as well as Minnesota, California and Mexico.

T.L. Senn, head of Clemson University's horticultural department, said his 15-20 years of research in seaweed has left him convinced it will work as a supplement.

But farmers shouldn't regard seaweed as a cheap substitute for fertilizer, he said.

"We say fertilizer and seaweed are a good combination," he said, "but seaweed materials themselves contain very little nitrogen, phosphorus or potassium, which is the basis for most fertilizer."

Campbell agrees his four-year-old product cannot replace fertilizer. But he says it can reduce the amount of fertilizer needed.

FOREIGN CAR PARTS

Complete Selection of Most Parts for the Popular Imports.

PASSPORT AUTO SUPPLY

1403 Harvey Road
Just off the East Bi-Pass
College Station

693-9411

INTRODUCING THE NEW

jogbra

for the women athlete

The Locker Room

SPORTSHOES UNLIMITED
ACROSS FROM MANOR EAST MALL 779.9484

Almanac

United Press International
Today is Monday, Feb. 25, the 56th day of 1980 with 310 to follow.

The moon is moving toward its null phase.

The morning star is Saturn.

The evening stars are Mercury, Venus, Mars and Jupiter.

Those born on this day are under the sign of Pisces.

French painter Pierre Renoir was born Feb. 25, 1841.

On this date in history:
In 1901, J.P. Morgan formed the United States Steel Corp. in New Jersey, to become the na-

tion's first "billion-dollar" enterprise.

In 1919, Oregon became the first state to put a tax on gasoline — 1 percent.

In 1967, American warships began shelling Vietnam.

In 1975, President Ford warned Cambodia would soon fall to the Communists unless Congress approved his request for \$222 million in new aid.

A thought for the day: American Philosopher William James said, "There is no more miserable human being than one in whom nothing is habitual but indecision."

The Cow Hop

The Biggest Burger Bargains in B-CS!

GIANT 1/3 LB. HOMEMADE BURGER \$1.35
served with a pile of real French Fries or salad. Dress it yourself at our salad bar. Lots of extras too.

Mushrooms 25c extra
Bacon 30c extra
Chili Jalapeno 20c extra
5c extra

BBQ SANDWICH \$1.45
1/3 lb. of delicious hickory-smoked BBQ on a bun, served with a pile of French Fries

NACHOS \$1.35
3/4 lb. plate of homemade chips, real cheddar & Monterey Jack cheese & lots of Jalapeno

1/2 BBQ CHICKEN \$1.75
1/2 a giant chicken served with a terrific sauce & pile of French Fries

SIRLOIN STEAK \$2.95
8 oz. with French Fries and Texas Toast (after 2 p.m.)

CHEF SALAD \$1.25
Unbelievable 1 lb. salad plate with 6 delicious ingredients and dressing of your choice

CHICKEN-FRIED STEAK SANDWICH \$1.70
Our newest item, served on a bun with a pile of French Fries & gravy if you like.

Sodas — Teas (30-45c) — Beer (50c)

Open 10:30-9:00 Everyday
846-1588 317 UNIVERSITY DR. (NORTHGATE)

Battalion Classifieds
Call 845-2611

ALBUM SPECIALS

LINDA RONSTADT "Mad Love" \$5.47

WARREN ZEVON "Bad Luck Streak" \$5.47

MAHOGANY RUSH "What's Next" \$4.79

THE KNACK "Little Girls Understand" \$5.47

CHUCK MANGIONE "Fun 'N Games" \$5.47

J. GEILS BAND "Love Stinks" \$5.47

WISHBONE ASH "Just Testing" \$4.79

NAZARETH "Malice in Wonderland" \$4.79

HEART "Bebe Le Stranger" \$5.47

JOHNNY WINTER "Raisin' Cain" \$4.79

ROBIN TROWER "Victims of Fury" \$4.79

BUDGET TAPES AND RECORDS

PLUS \$1.00 OFF OUR REGULAR PRICE

ON ALL OTHER ALBUMS & TAPES!

Open 10-7 Mon.-Sat.

315 Univ. Dr. at Northgate (713) 846-5515