

Irrigation Water Can Fight Farm Fires

Worried about where to get a ready and dependable source of water in the event of a fire?

Many area farmers have the best possible source of water and don't even realize it, according to Jerry Shaffer of PP&L.

Make the irrigation system serve also as a fire fighting system, suggests Shaffer

All the farmer has to do if he has an irrigation pump is to add an adaptor to make the irrigation system fit a standard fire hose coupling

Shaffer said most local fire companies will be more than happy to work with a farmer in making the irrigation system usable for fire fighting. He noted that a local fire company gave a coupling to Glenn Thomas, Lititz RD3. All Thomas had to do was weld some handles onto the system, he said.

Fire companies are interested in cooperating with local farmers because the irrigation system represents a dependable and adequate source of water in event of a fire on a particular farm.

But even more important, according to Shaffer, the system can be used to help fight fires over a wide area, since the irrigation system can be used to

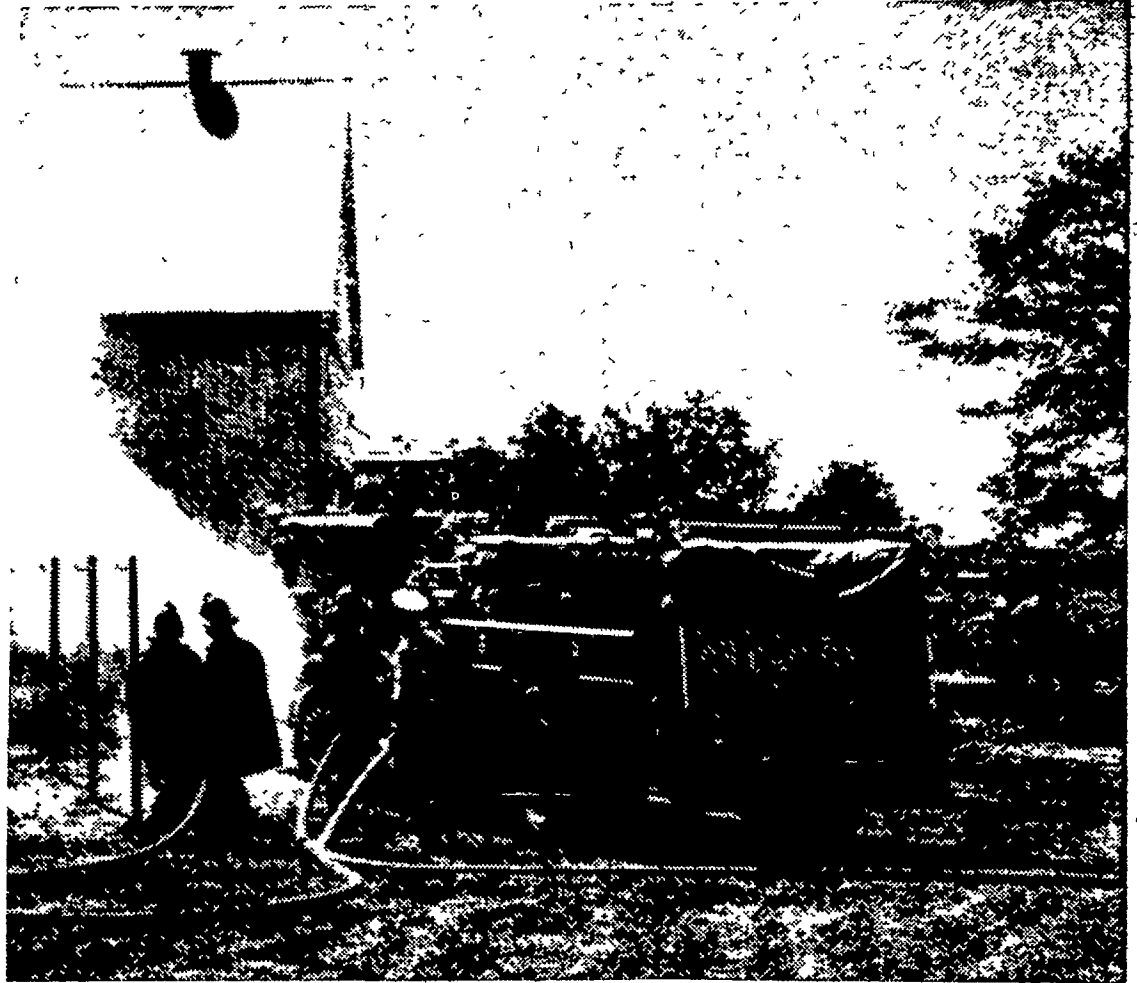
fill fire tank trucks. Tank trucks can often be filled easier and faster in this manner than with conventional water sources such as streams and ponds, Shaffer said. This can be particularly important in adverse weather conditions, he said.

Although Shaffer is recommending an electrical pump with a minimum of 20 horsepower in conjunction with a minimum 200 gallon per minute well system, he said there is a wide variety of possibilities depending on the individual farmer's situation. The fire fighting technique can also be used with non-electric systems, he said.

The Thomas system is a 30 horsepower electric motor on a well which gives 400 gallons per minute at 100 pounds per square inch.

Thomas irrigates 30 acres, including nine acres of celery, eight of sweet corn, two acres of strawberries, and 11 acres of truck crops including six acres of pumpkins.

Thomas says he likes the flexibility of this system. Besides providing fire protection at a moment's notice, he said, "I can automatically stop watering at 3 a.m. and the ground will be ready to move the pipe by 7 a.m."



During a practice run this year, Neffsville firemen spray water directly from the irrigation well onto one of the Thomas' farm buildings. With little effort and ex-

pense, many local farmers with irrigation systems can have the equivalent of their own fire hydrant, according to a PP&L official.



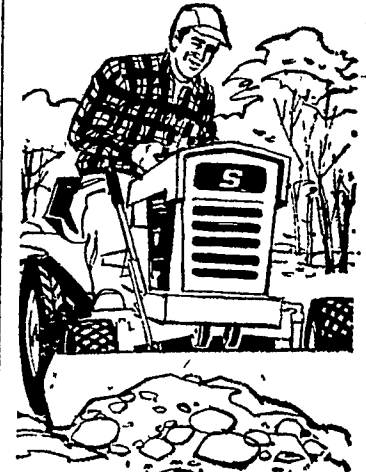
A Neffsville Fireman demonstrates how a fire hose can be readily connected to an irrigation pump system — once some minor adjustments have been made to make the connection possible. Farmers with irrigation systems should seriously

consider making the small effort required to make his irrigation system usable, not only for himself but possibly even his neighbors, for fire fighting, a PP&L official said.

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