

# How to Manage Your Farm Pond for Maximum Enjoyment

An attractive pond which yields plenty of good-sized fish and provides enjoyable swimming or boating.

That should be the goal of the farm pond owner, but it's a goal which can't be achieved by simply building the pond and forgetting it.

Too many ponds have major problems such as algae and weeds out of control, muskrat infestation and unbalanced fish populations. All these problems exist because of lack of proper management, according to Max

Smith, Lancaster County agent.

An attractive and productive farm pond, like most of the other benefits of farm life, requires careful management, he added.

At three farm pond meetings earlier this summer attended by himself, some state fish officials and about 50 farm pond owners, Smith said the following points were stressed:

Control muskrats. Use stones along the bank to keep them from burrowing and plug holes

that do appear with clay and stone to discourage muskrats.

—Maintain a proper balance of fish species.

Smith noted that many ponds have too many bluegills, resulting in small sized bluegills and even elimination of other species. This is true because bluegills reproduce so rapidly they over populate the pond quickly. This can be controlled by stocking a high ratio of bass to bluegills—or don't use bluegills at all.

The commendation used to be to stock 100 bass to 1,000 blue-

gills. Now the recommendation is 100 bass to the acre, along with 400 golden shiners or 400 fat-head minnows.

Once a pond is stocked with fish, the balance must continue to be maintained. For this reason, heavy fishing is recommended. With a bass-bluegill program, remove about 15 pounds of bluegills for each pound of bass.

—Control algae and weeds after securing permits. Treatment probably will be necessary several times during the growing season.

Smith urged farmers to apply for a permit from the Fish Commission before treating a pond for algae or weeds. The permit is available at the Extension office or from the Pennsylvania Waterway Patrolman (formerly known as fish warden) Charles A. Prinze, Lititz RD2.

While there is no penalty at the present time for failure to have a permit, in event of a mishap downstream resulting from the pond treatment, the permit likely would be important protection for the farmer, Smith explained.

Assisting Smith and Prinz in recent meetings with farmers was David Daniels, of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission.

—Practice farm pond safety by having rescue equipment at the pond. The equipment should be at the site ready for use and not in a nearby building. Equipment should include long boards, wooden ladders, rope, and inflated inner tube.

—Keep livestock out of the pond. Besides being detrimental to recreational uses such as swimming, the animals trample down the pond banks.

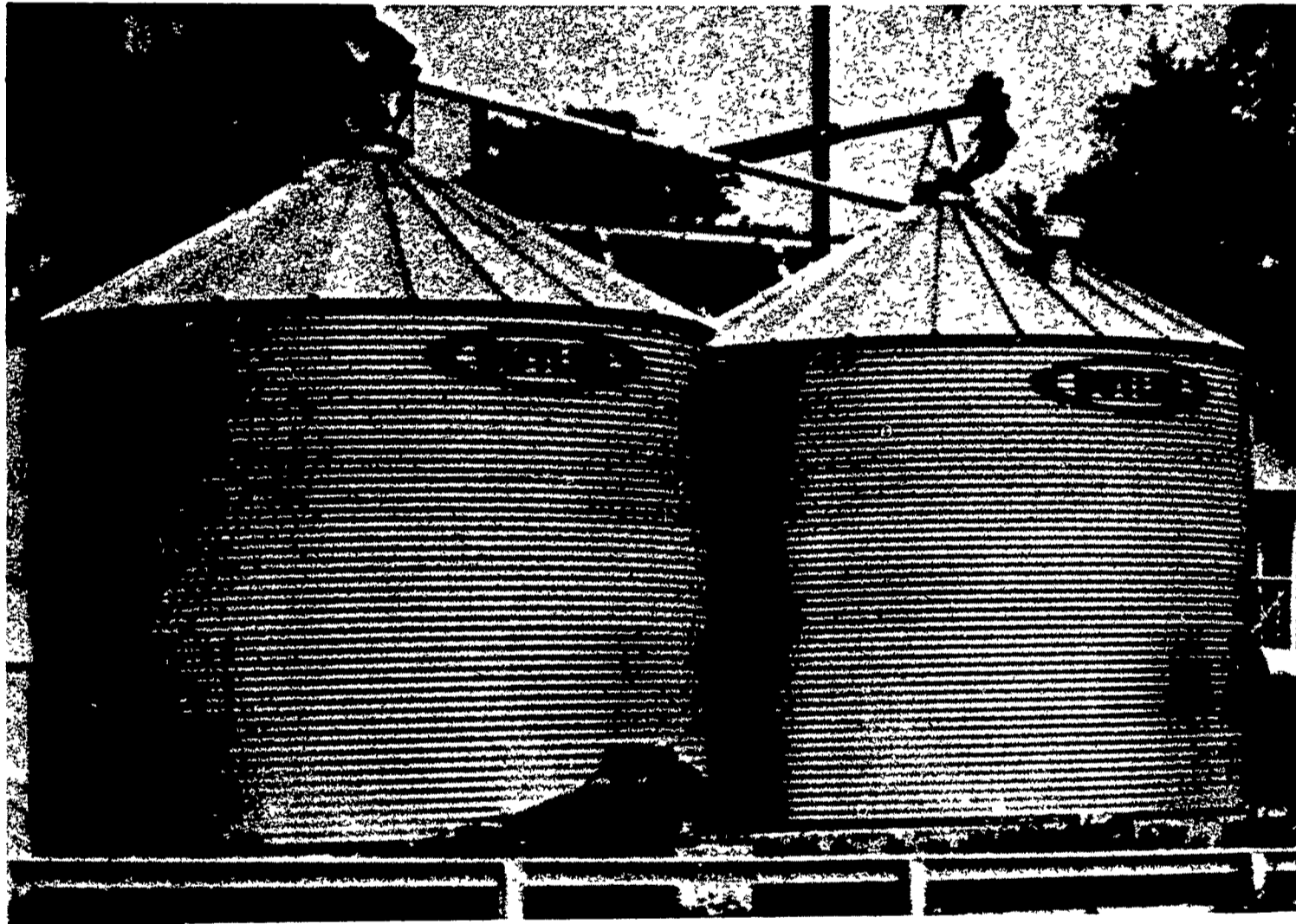
To achieve good algae and weed control, the water must be fairly deep, 18 inches or more, very near the bank. But animals using a pond gradually push fill into this area near the bank, making the water shallow and more subject to algae and weeds, Smith explained.

—Fertilize the pond with a complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10 to encourage growth of plankton which gives the water a greenish color and prevents sunlight from penetrating to the bottom of the pond.

Clear water in a pond is not to be encouraged, because the sunlight penetrates, resulting in growth of algae and weeds. The pond "with clear water is headed for trouble," Smith stated.

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## Farmers Urged To Maintain Wheat, Corn Acre History

The Lancaster County ASC office is urging farmers to return acreage cards which have been mailed to them in order to preserve future wheat and corn acreage history.

So far in response to the first mailing, only about 2,000 farmers, or about one-third of the 6,000 total, have replied. A second mailing is being sent out.

Miss Dorothy Neel, ASC executive director, stated that farmers not interested in participating in the federal feed programs this year should still maintain their allotments in order to be eligible if market conditions change in the future.

Cards were mailed to all farmers not enrolled in the wheat and feed grain programs, asking them to report the 1971 crop acreages.

Failure to return the card by July 26, means that a "zero" acreage will be recorded for wheat and corn for 1971. This will reduce the corn base and wheat allotment by 20 per cent for 1972.

Acreage not reported will reduce the wheat and corn acreage history for the individual farm and also mean loss of crop history for the county Miss Neel explained.

"All farmers, regardless of whether they are interested in farm programs or not, should complete and return the acreage report card," she said.