

Fertilizer Is Not a Major Factor in Chesapeake Bay Pollution, Speaker Says

Termination of all commercial fertilizer application to farmland would not measurably improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay area, according to Dr. Fred P. Miller, University of Maryland Extension soil and water resources specialist.

Dr. Miller made his statement during a panel discussion at the third annual meeting of the Delaware-Maryland Plant Food Association recently in Baltimore.

In an earlier speech titled "Agriculture and the Environment," the Maryland specialist cited a run-off pollution study conducted in a nonagricultural, nonurbanized 100-acre tract in northern Baltimore County.

The study showed that the annual runoff of soluble salts attributable solely to Mother Nature—termed background erosion—amounted to 17 tons per square mile.

Looking at the Potomac River, Dr. Miller pointed out that independent studies show 48 per cent of the river's nitrogen runoff into the Chesapeake Bay is contributed by the metropolitan area of Washington, D. C.

This 48 per cent contribution from the urbanized area compares with a 52 per cent nitrogen contribution from the entire 12,000-square-mile watershed area upriver. And this upriver area includes several towns and small cities, in addition to farmland, he emphasized.

Beside this, he noted, about 88 per cent of the Potomac River's pollution due to phosphorus runoff is chargeable to the metropolitan area of Washington, D. C.

Like Mark Twain's reaction to reports of his death, the charges concerning agricultural fertilizer's contribution to the total water pollution problem have often been greatly exaggerated, the Maryland soils specialist charged.

For example, he noted that various authorities estimate agriculture's share of the total nitrogen pollution problem all the way from 25 to 90 per cent. And agriculture's share of phosphorus pollution is placed in a wide range from 8 to 70 per cent.

"Obviously, somebody's estimates are wrong," he commented.

One problem, he declared, is that too many would-be authorities conduct a small study in one geographical location and try to draw nationwide implications from this.

As an example, he noted one study conducted in the Sangamon

River and the Lake Decatur area of central Illinois in the midst of an intensive cropping area.

Results of this study have been used to make sensational charges on a nationwide basis against pollution attributable to fertilizer and other agricultural cropping practices.

Dr. Miller declared that many reputable scientists doubt the validity of the study itself, let alone its indictment of agriculture on a nationwide basis.

"We have to admit, however, that agriculture is a major contributor of nutrients which

cause deterioration of water quality through the process of eutrophication. The other major contributors of such nutrients are Mother Nature, domestic sewage, urban runoff and industrial wastes.

"But the sources of nutrient pollution within agriculture are complex and extremely variable. Fertilizer is not the only culprit, by far."

Animal waste is also a big factor, along with naturally occurring nutrients which erode and leach from cultivated soils," the Maryland specialist said.

WASHINGTON REPORT Congressman Edwin D. Eshleman

16th District—Pennsylvania



Despite many questions about it and criticisms of it, the wage-price freeze has proved effective. Congress did not make it work, the President alone did not make it work, but the American people did. Their cooperative efforts made the difference in stabilizing prices, restoring consumer

confidence and strengthening the economy.

Evidence of this effectiveness has begun to come in and should be of interest to everyone. The evidence shows that everyone's sacrifices have resulted in everyone benefitting from an upturn in prosperity and a downturn in inflation.

In the area of prices the trend was definitely toward less inflation. The Wholesale Price Index, which is one of the prime devices for measuring the inflationary picture, dropped in both September and October and preliminary estimates are that November figures are down, too. Of 3,885 prices covered in a special Department of Commerce survey of the wage-price freeze, 87 per cent showed no change in price from August to September. And the rate of inflation as measured through use of the Gross National Product (the sum total of all the Nation's wealth) has been dropping steadily.

In the meantime consumer confidence was on the rise. The Sindinger Consumer Confidence Index has been going up ever since the freeze got underway. There was a 10-point jump between the start of the freeze and mid-November. In addition a survey of plant and equipment spending plans showed an anticipated increase in capital spending of seven per cent which is the first real increase in this area since 1969.

One of the bleakest outlooks, according to some reports, is in the employment field. Yet, the statistics show some encouraging trends. Even though the unemployment rate has been too high, total employment has been increasing. In other words, there are more people in jobs than ever before in our history even with the six per cent unemployment rate.

Most important, the people in the jobs tend to be married men with families to support. Only three per cent of these men were unemployed as of last month—the lowest figure in a year.

Other bright signs on the economic front are the expansion of retail sales, the increase of housing starts and the big jump in automobile sales.

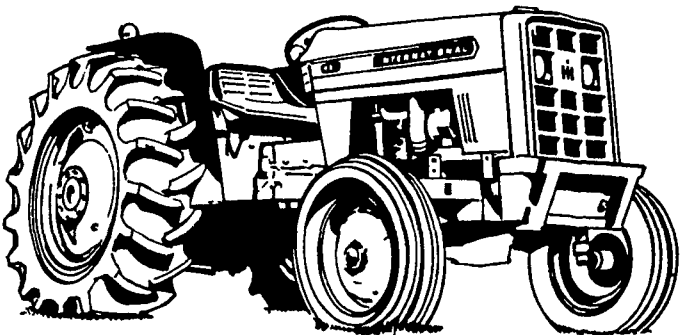
Retail sales for October this year ran close to 12 per cent above October, 1970.

The rate of housing starts in the first 10 months of 1971 is higher than the annual rate of any year in history, and that also means more sales of consumer goods like furniture and appliances.

Automobile purchases reached an all-time high in October with more than a million new cars sold.

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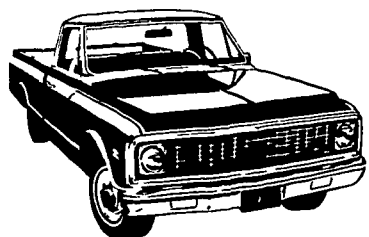
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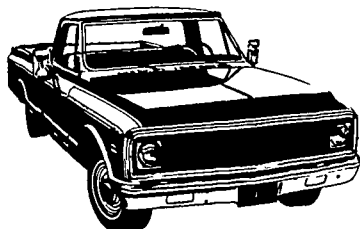
Fifteen members of the Pequea Valley FFA Chapter who received their greenhand degrees at a recent chapter meeting are: left to right, kneeling, Tim Martin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Martin, Honeybrook RD2; Barry Diem, son of Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Diem, New Holland RD2; and Mike Dalmas, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Dalmas, Gap RD2. Standing, left to right, Richard Garver, son of Mrs. Dorothy Garver, Paradise RD1; John Beyer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Beyer, Kinzer RD1; Roland Barker, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Barker, Gap RD2; Nelson Martin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmur Martin, Honey Brook RD1; Carlton Gregg, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Gregg, Gordonville RD1; Tom Denlinger, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Denlinger, Gap RD1; Sam Allgyer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Allgyer, Kinzers RD1; Mike Weir, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Weir, Gap RD1; Dennis Sandoe, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Sandoe, Narvon RD2; Glenn Clark, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Clark, Paradise RD1; Gordon Hoover, son of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Hoover, Gap RD1; and Joe Stringer, son of Mrs. and Mrs. Joseph Stringer, Gap RD2.

DECEMBER DISCOUNT DEALS



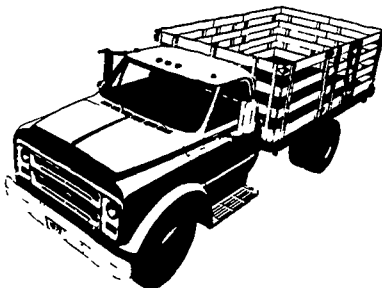
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