

Obstacles to Wise Land Use

What's stopping some of our best farmland from being chopped up into subdivisions?

Or a quiet village from being overpowered by sudden, "unstoppable" development?

Or a recreation spot, unique for its wildlife, from being developed till it loses its main attraction?

In essence -- what control does the public have over private land use? In a study on land and water resources, ERS looks at this question. It concludes that there is an almost limitless variety of tools or devices available to governments to control land use. The more general problem is that they are not being used. This is particularly true in rural areas.

The ERS study notes further that those local governments using the tools do not in general devote sufficient resources to make them effective.

Control by the general public can take many forms -- including special purpose districts, but most of the power is in the hands of Federal, State, and local general purpose governments.

The Federal Government has the immense power to tax and spend; the State governments have a lesser power in this area but they have broad regulatory power; and local governments have a more limited power to tax and regulate but the unique power to hear and express the views of individual citizens through such means as council meetings and public hearings.

Traditionally, it is the local government that regulates land use, with the State governments having delegated this authority.

The main means have been through zoning ordinances and

subdivision regulations. Building, housing, and health codes are also widely used, but are more limited in scope.

For rural land use, it may be the county government that has the greatest control or the town or township, depending upon whom the State authorizes. This varies widely among the States.

Zoning of unincorporated or rural areas is authorized in all 50 States covering land in more than three-fourths of the 3,000 counties in the U.S.

However, local governments usually have the option of either adopting or not adopting land use regulations.

In general rural areas are far more deficient in the field of land use planning and regulation than urban areas. They're less likely to have a planning board, less likely to have a full-time planner, and they spend only about a third of what urban areas do per person for planning and regulating land use in their community.

Yet many of these rural areas are where the action is in terms of growth and they're the least able to cope with it.

Sometimes they lack the legislation. But often, they simply lack effective enforcement.

An example:

A small town in Vermont had the "misfortune" to be near good ski slopes. It suddenly became one of the biggest growth sites in the State -- lots were sold and resold, nightclubs proliferated, a huge condominium went up.

And the town of fewer than 2,000 permanent residents couldn't keep up with the services required even after taxes were doubled. The new sewage treatment plant became inadequate with the new building boom -- police costs soared -- and traffic jammed for miles through the town on winter weekends.

Vermont has one of the most stringent land use laws in the country. Local officials, however, say the State doesn't provide enough funds to communities for land use planning, zoning, and enforcement to make the laws effective.

The National Commission on Urban Problems reported that a sample survey taken in 1967 showed Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's) spent three times more per person for planning, zoning, and building regulation activities than did non-SMSA's -- essentially rural areas.

In addition to budgeting more

money for land use planning and regulation, many communities need to take up the option on controls already available to them.

Take for instance the case of a predominantly agricultural county in California that couldn't put a stop to land speculation until much of its ranchland had been subdivided. Developers put in roads and mass-advertised the acre lots as vacation and second home sites.

It took several years, and some trial and error, before the county found effective regulation in the form of zoning to stop the essentially speculative subdivisions.

But, as one official said, "If you take a 1,000-acre ranch and divide it up into roughly 900 one-acre lots, with the remaining acreage in roads, you have ruined the ranch. A ranch with 900 owners can never be reassembled."

That county wound up with 17,000 acres of vacant lots.

With the county's current zoning, developers who want to change land zoned agricultural to residential have to request a variance from the planning office. And it's granted only if the developer can present a good argument why it should be done -- plus show an attractive plan for development.

So far, most of the requests for rezoning variances in the county have been for expansion of an existing community. And development in these areas usually causes no severe drain on such county services as police and fire protection and schools.

Just how many local governments actually exercise their authority to regulate land use is not known. National statistics aren't regularly or systematically collected.

But from the 1967 survey by the National Commission on Urban Problems, it's apparent that rural local governments lag considerably behind urban areas.

The survey showed only 48 percent of the counties outside SMSA's had a planning board -- compared with 80 percent of the counties in SMSA's.

In addition, 70 percent of the employees for planning and regulating land use worked part-time in areas outside SMSA's compared with only 28 percent inside SMSA's. For all jurisdictions attempting to regulate land use, fewer than 1 in 4 had any full-time employees.

The President has recommended and the Congress is now

considering legislation to establish a national land use policy. Legislation that is proposed would provide grants to States to assist them in improving their land use planning processes.

Most decisions would still be made at the local level in rural areas. The States would, however, be involved in decisions of more than local concern--such as environmental and regional matters.

In the decade ahead, the need to plan and regulate land use will increase as greater emphasis is placed on maintaining environmental quality standards. Practically all pollution problems have a land use dimension.

This will take greater coordination and integration of the powers available to the different levels of government in our Federal system.

Aerial Ladder Equipped

FARM PAINTING

We Spray it on and Brush It In!

FOR FREE ESTIMATES
CALL COLLECT 717-393-6530

OR WRITE
HENRY K. FISHER

2322 Old Phila. Pike
Lancaster, Pa. 17602

H E S T O N

FARM EQUIPMENT

Before You Buy Your

- WINDROWER
- STACKHAND
- FORAGE HARVESTER

SEE US FOR OUR
EVERYDAY LOW PRICES

Your Authorized Dealer

MILLER'S REPAIR

1 Mile North of Bird-in-Hand

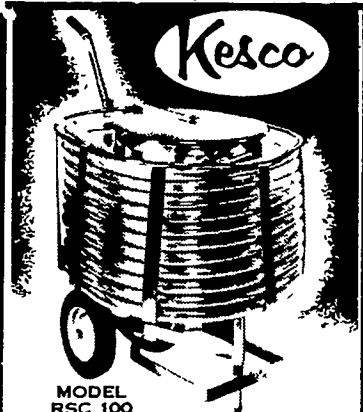
RD1 Bird-in-Hand, Pa.
Gibbons Road

Ph. 656-7013
or
656-7926

Yoder Cow

A registered Holstein in the herd of Jefferson D. Yoder, Elverson RD1, established production records for milk and butterfat production levels, as reported by Holstein-Friesian Association of America.

Rocky-Side Apollo, age six years three months, produced 25,430 pounds of milk, 960 pounds of butterfat in 350 days



A MILKMOVER SYSTEM

gets you out of the barn sooner--with more money in your pocket! It saves your lugging heavy pails of milk from barn to cooler.

- HAS MORE MILK CAPACITY
- PERMITS FASTER MILKING
- ELIMINATES EXTRA HELP
- PROTECTS MILK QUALITY
- IS 100% SELF-CLEANING
- HAS ELECTRIC CONTROLS
- FITS INTO ALL BARN
- EASILY INSTALLED

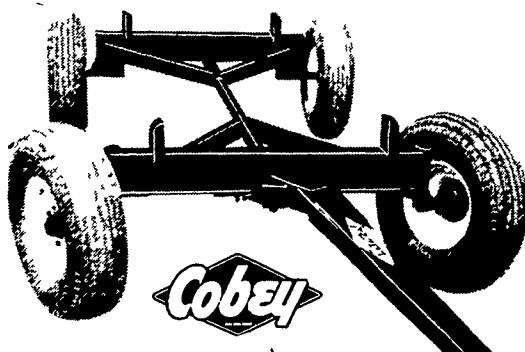
Available thru your local dairy equipment dealer or call the factory collect to arrange for a free demonstration on your farm

Manufactured by

DOUG
INDUSTRIES, INC
JOHNSON

110 BOX 283 ELKTON MD 21821
Phone 301-398 3451

FARM WAGONS



5 Ton - 62" Tread

6 & 7 Ton Models in stock.

BINKLEY & HURST BROS.

LITITZ R.D. 4, PA.

PH. 626-4705

Rothsville Station Road.

BEFORE YOU BUY ANY SILO OR SILO EQUIPMENT....

CHECK WITH YOUR
LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE

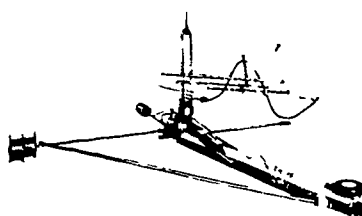
- C. B. HOOBER
- JOHN KREIDER
- J. SAMUEL SHERER
- EUGENE HELLER

New and 1 demonstrator Starline roller-mills, used 24' rebuilt Jamesway Unloader and used 20' rebuilt Jamesway Unloader, both with 5 HP motors We will install.

★ STARLINE UNLOADER

★ AUTOMATIC BELT FEEDERS

★ WE SERVICE WHAT WE SELL.



LANCASTER SILO CO., INC.

2436 Creek Hill Road or
2008 Horseshoe Road, Lancaster, Pa.