



A contingent of conservationists attending this week's Northeastern Area Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts stopped by Amos Funk's Farm Market before heading home to their respective states. The meeting was held at Lancaster's Hilton Inn.

Conservation

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offer a great deal of assistance. "In Vermont, for example, we have eight courts set up especially to rule on land use questions. Our courts have ruled that towns can control their growth rates, and these same courts recognize that one of our most important goals in the state is the preservation of prime agricultural land."

Paul Johnson, president of the West Virginia Association, reported on the deliberations of the rural development forum. "The objective of the federal Rural Development Act is to obtain a balance between rural and urban lifestyles," Johnson said.

"During our forum, though, somebody asked an interesting question. Are we in danger of imposing lifestyles on some rural minorities, like the Amish and some Indian tribes, who don't really want to live like city people?"

"Another interesting question presented at our forum," Johnson continued, "was this: The objective of the Rural Development Act is to attract

industry to rural areas to make those areas more prosperous. Couldn't the same goal be attained by spending those funds to upgrade farm income?"

"Nobody knew the answers to these questions," Johnson said, "but the attempt to answer them was educational. Our discussions were vigorous and pointed, and confusion was universal. But I think we all learned something."

Another speaker, Afton Schadel, a program specialist with the Pennsylvania Conservation Commission, wrapped up the findings of the forum on non-point pollution control. Schadel first defined non-point pollution as that which comes from diffuse sources, such as soil sediment, fertilizers, animal wastes. A point source of pollution is one with a specific discharge point, such as a pipe or a ditch.

Schadel said the aim of many environmental programs is to achieve a zero pollution rate, where the effect of any discharge into a stream would be nil. There are some inconsistencies in many environmental programs, Schadel commented. "In New Jersey, for example, the waste from hundreds of thousands of overwintering geese is overlooked, but small farms are regulated with strong laws."

Concluding his remarks, Schadel said that the U. S. En-

vironmental Protection Agency may eventually provide funds directly to local conservation districts, and he foresees the day when some districts may become enforcement agencies.

In summing up the forum on challenges in soil and water research, Lancaster County's Amos Funk told about the enormous potential for waste treatment existing in grasses and forage crops. In one study, he said, beef animals were grazed on grassland used to dispose of waste water from a vegetable processing plant. Weight gains on these animals were three times what they would have been on normal range land.

"Recycling waste through soils and plant cover is the safest thing to do," Funk said, "if erosion is controlled. This includes waste from municipal sewerage treatment plants. You need only 130 acres of grassland to dispose of all the sewerage from a town of 10,000 people."

Funk noted that currently there are three studies under way to determine the best way of disposing of sludge from sewerage treatment plants. These include rototilling into the topsoil, deep trenching and composting the material with wood chips. Of these methods, he said, the last seems to hold out the most promise.

Finally, Funk reported on work that's being done on a computer program that would be able to predict the extent of movement of various agricultural chemicals after application to croplands. Such a program would enable the farmer to plan his farming activities so as to minimize the danger of polluting nearby bodies of water.

Calendar

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Tuesday, August 14

10 a.m. - Guernsey Field Day, Romella Farms, Hessdale.
7:30 p.m. - Farm and Home Foundation Board of Directors meeting, Farm and Home Center.


Thursday, August 16

Lancaster County Holstein Field Day, Ernest Sauder farm, Silver Spring Road, Lancaster.

10 a.m. - Chester County Holstein Club Field Day, Jacob K. Stoltzfus farm, Oxford RD1.

Saturday, August 18

National Hay Association Convention, Hilton Inn, Troy, Mich., August 18-21.



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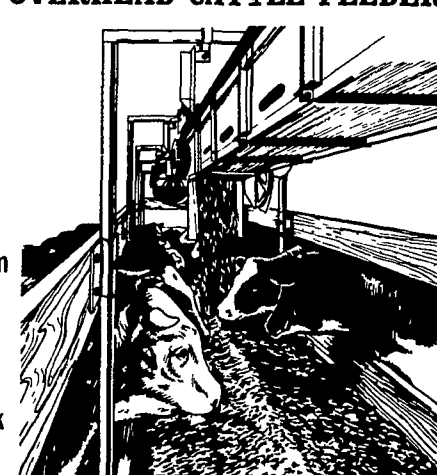
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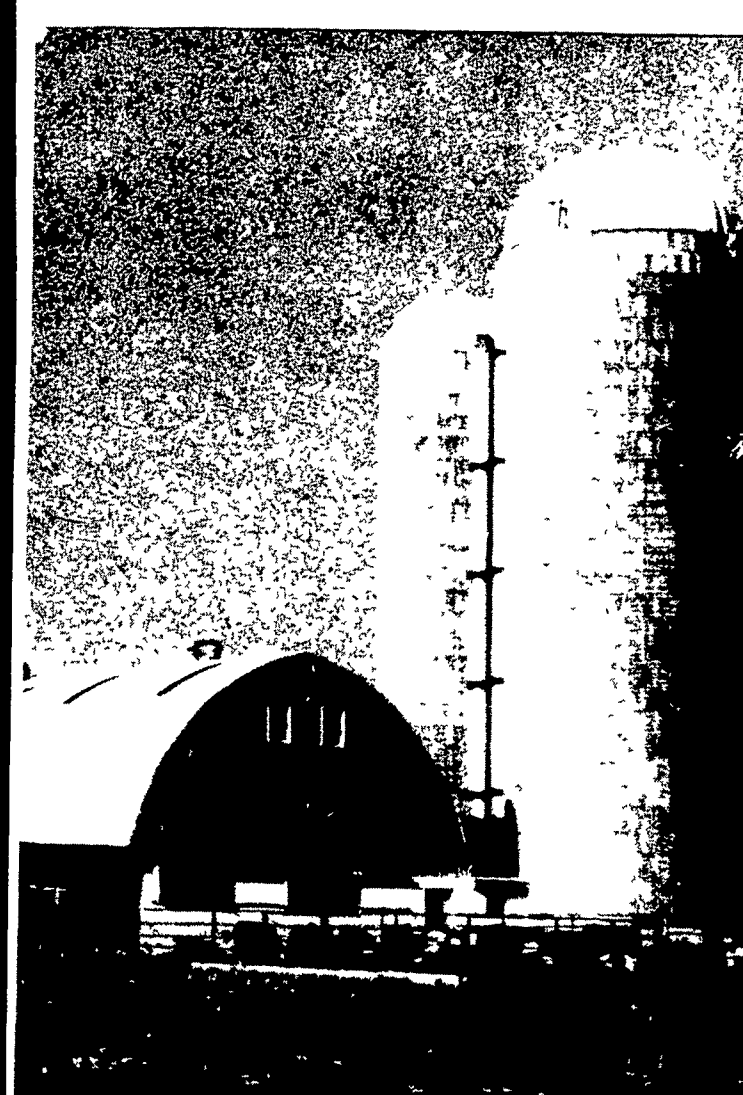
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