

Financing

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there were a lot of questions that had to be answered before such an undertaking.

One of the strongest proponents of a county fair is Norman Swann, a former chairman of the Manheim Fair Association, who said he had tried to start a county fair 10 years ago but at that time "no one listened."

He said the Manheim Fair Association can no longer use school property for its fair. He pointed to problems New Holland is having with finding room for any expansion. New Holland now holds its fair on the town's main street, "with no where to go" for expansion.

Swann said that the Manheim Association had started talking about a county fair a year ago and that that association is backing the proposal "100 percent."

Do Better Job

"The county could do a better job in all agricultural phases on a county-wide area," he said. He said a large committee on a county-wide level could accomplish more for a bigger show, which he said probably would be patterned after the state show.

Swann said he doesn't know what property might be available for a county fair, but said one possibility would be to hold it in Quarryville, where the

Solanco Fair Assn. is in the process of buying more land for expansion of its fair.

He said he expected that if a county fair was started, local fairs would be eliminated, adding that a former chairman of the state fair administration had told him several years ago that Lancaster County should have one fair. He said he visualized a central volunteer organization for a county fair.

He estimated that 40 to 50 acres of land would be needed, and would probably cost \$½ million. Asked where he thought this money would come from he said that most local fair associations would have money to dispose of if local fairs were eliminated, that the State Fair Fund has money available for this, and that hopefully farm organizations would support it similar to the way they did the building of the Farm and Home Center.

Martin Nestleroth, who is president of the Manheim Fair group and reportedly was instrumental in having Monday night's meeting called, said that he personally is in favor of the county fair, and feels that "the benefits outweigh the problems if the whole county is willing to cooperate."

He said that he and his board members (Manheim Fair) had not taken a vote on the issue but were waiting to find out at Monday night's meeting where the finances would be coming from.

He said his group is also waiting to find out what other areas have to say Monday concerning giving up their own fairs, and also how the Fair Fund money would be divided.

New Holland

Although New Holland apparently is having the most problems in keeping its fair operating, two officials of that community's fair organization were not particularly optimistic about a county event. New Holland now conducts its fair on the main street of town, and according to one spokesman, a lot of people in New Holland, and some state officials, are "fussing" about getting the fair "off the streets."

Carl Groff, treasurer of New Holland's organization, said he considers the proposed county fair "wishful thinking."

"I don't think Lancaster County could or would support a fair," he told the Lancaster Farming.

"And where would you get land in Lancaster County—it would cost more than a million dollars."

He said that a county fair would mean one of two things: either the county would get half of the money that the State Fair Assn. gives for fairs, with the community fairs dividing the other half, or the small fairs would be eliminated.

He raised the question of whether or not the state would run the county fair. "I don't think it would pay for itself," he said, pointing out that people don't pay now to go to the local fairs.

The timing of a county fair was another problem Groff brought up.

"When would they have it?" he asked. "There wouldn't be enough to show in August," he said, adding

that September would conflict with local fairs.

He also raised the question of whether a county fair would be just another tourist attraction, rather than an agricultural event.

Dr. Louis Williams, president of the New Holland organization, said he is keeping "an open mind" on the issue, and has no objections to a county fair if it can be run "in good taste" and with high quality.

However, he is opposed to it "if it means a cut in state money to local fairs."

"I'm first for keeping local fairs," he said. "They're important to small towns," he went on, pointing out that two of their main values are the ties they keep between local people, and the opportunity the smaller fairs give youth of a community to show what they can do.

"I'm going to the meeting Monday and if I can be convinced that a county fair can operate without spending millions of dollars, and if it will have leadership and can be worthwhile, then I won't object," he said.

He said that while a county fair might give more farmers and exhibitors more

opportunity, he also had seen some "big ones" with less quality in exhibits than the local fairs had.

Adding that it would be difficult for the New Holland Fair to operate without state money, Dr. Williams said he didn't know whether a county fair would mean loss of money from the state.

"I can't really see it getting off the ground without spending a million or two on it," he said.

Administrative Problems
Carlton Groff, president of the Solanco Fair Board (Quarryville) said that he sees a lot of administrative problems, more than anything, connected with a county fair.

"To do it right would cost a lot of money," he added.

He said that the state fair administrators allot funds to local fairs and there are some "Divergent opinions" among them on how to best spend the money. He said some are for the small fairs, while others want to eliminate these and have just one major county fair.

Groff said that he's "open" to a county fair, but he believes the local fairs better serve the interest of what his

own area needs. He said he would probably exhibit at a county fair, but wouldn't be as inclined to take an official position with a county fair organization.

He said that a lot of exhibitors from this area (small garden items, etc.) would not take part in a county fair, that a county event "would be more commercial growers."

Ephrata Mayor Lloyd Gerhart, who has been president of the Ephrata Fair Association for 25 years, said he didn't know what kind of support his association would be able to give a county fair, that all the money they had raised had been given away.

He said that the association has given about \$135,000 to the Ephrata Hospital, Rec Center and fire companies in the last 25 years, with another \$5,000 pledged to the hospital this year.

Lack of Time

He said that his active members are all volunteers, and that he doubted if many of them, including himself, would have any time to give to a county fair.

According to David Huber,

secretary of the Lampeter's fair board, the county will have to decide what type of fair it wants—a normal one with 75 percent midway, or a more educational one, like communities now have—and then start looking at financing.

He said a carnival type fair costs more, "but that's where the money comes from."

He said a big fair would not be economical unless you "go to entertainment," and he is opposed to this type. The fair should be educational, he said.

He said that basically, a county fair wouldn't detract from local fairs, but that the timing would be a big factor, that the county fair should not overlap with smaller ones.

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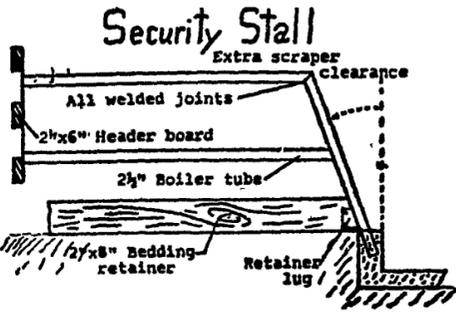
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