

Kerstetter urges land use participation by farmers

HARRISBURG, Pa. - Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Raymond J. Kerstetter last week joined Governor Shapp in urging Pennsylvanians to participate in discussion of land use issues, problems, and solutions relating to the preservation of prime agricultural lands throughout the state.

Kerstetter said that the retention of farmland is a key component of any land use policy, and urged Pennsylvania's farmers and farm organizations to present their views on farmland preservation to the Governor's Office of State Planning and Development (OSPD).

Governor Shapp designated OSPD as the lead

agency for land use planning in the Commonwealth in 1973. OSPD is holding a series of public meetings through May 1, 1977 to inform people of land use issues and to get their opinions on ways to solve the problems we face, including an Interim Land Policy Report which was completed in late 1975. Citizen input from these meetings will determine the kind of land use program that will be developed for the Commonwealth.

Kerstetter pledged the Department of Agriculture's support for OSPD in the conduct and publicity of the public meetings. He noted that the department would continue, as in the past, to seek alternatives to the loss of farmlands within the Commonwealth.

"Almost half the prime farmland in the state is located in southeastern Pennsylvania where rapid urbanization is underway," Kerstetter said. "New developments are taking their toll on these soils which are among the finest in the nation for agriculture."

The Commonwealth's efforts to preserve farmland date back to 1966 when Act 515 enabled certain counties to covenant with landowners for the preservation of land in forest, water supply, farm or open space use. Only five counties have made any significant use of the Act.

The Open Space Act, 442 of 1968 was intended to broaden the Commonwealth's methods for acquiring land

for open space uses including farming, but the Act was not funded by the State Legislature and no land has been purchased by the designated agencies under the act.

The 1974 "Clean and Green Law," Act 319, was enacted to implement a constitutional amendment allowing taxation of farmland and agricultural reserves on the basis of use rather than market value.

Kerstetter said that participation under the Act is not extensive in any county. Thirty counties have granted preferential assessments according to a recent survey made by the Department of Agriculture. "At best," Kerstetter said,

"preferential assessments are a stop-gap measure that is most likely to make a difference in conversion for land that is owned by farmers who want to remain in farming in anyway and are not in areas of urban expansion."

Kerstetter said that the meetings are part of a year long public participation program aimed at making the land use issues visible to

the people. He expressed his hope that the process would allow Pennsylvanians an opportunity to voice their preferences regarding land use and preservation of farmland, providing a popular basis for major administrative and legislative actions.

He urged those interested in attending the meetings throughout the state to call 717-787-2969.

Omelet making taught

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Sixty graduate students of New York University's School of Home Economics recently got a taste of omelet demonstrations, AEB style. The teacher of the course in Demonstration Technique for these Masters degree candidates is Mrs. Carol Brock, food editor of the New York Daily News Sunday Magazine, a supplement circulated to the nearly 4 million readers of the Sunday New York newspaper.

Mrs. Brock had seen Howard Helmer, AEB's Eastern Representative, present an omelet workshop and program for the national media editors in New York City this Spring and invited him to conduct a session for her New York University class. She said that an actual audience participation demonstration is the "ultimate" in demonstration techniques and wanted her students to experience one.

Helmer presented AEB's "Everything You've Always Wanted to Know About Eggs But Were Too Chicken to Ask" program in its entirety and had the students turning out picture perfect omelets, many for the first time.

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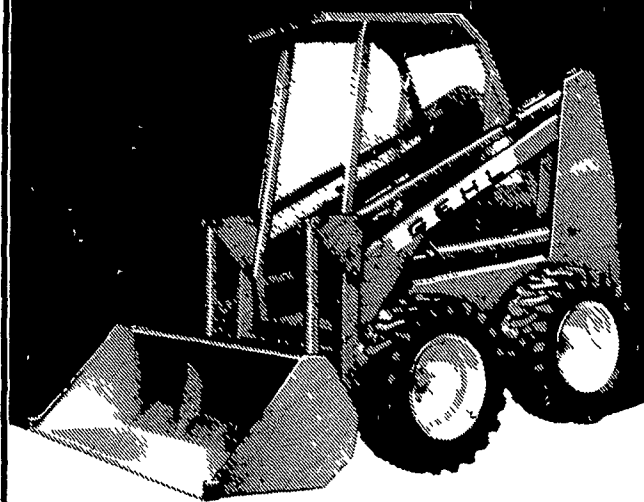
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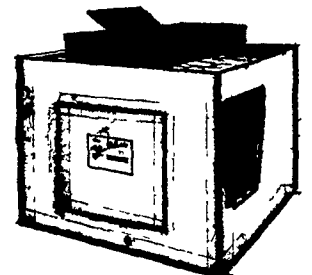
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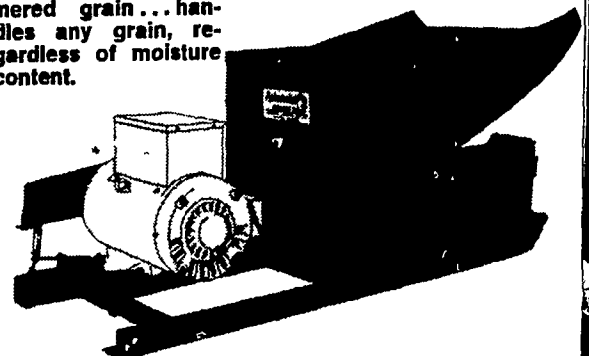
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