

# Lancaster Farming

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## Land buying plan arouses opposition



John Scott

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Ag-Land I Agricultural Land Purchase Plan proposed by a Midwestern bank and the nation's largest stock brokerage firm, Merrill, Lynch, Fenner, Pierce, and Smith, received some powerful opposition from members of Congress and farm group leaders this week.

The Plan, if it is approved, could "create a whole new generation of sharecroppers," National Grange Master John Scott told Lancaster Farming in a telephone interview Friday morning.

Scott said so far the matter is still "pretty much up in the air," although the bank and the stock brokerage firm are apparently pulling back at least temporarily.

"Some members of Congress are dead-set against it,"

Scott told this newspaper. Lancaster Farming attempted to get in touch with Senator George McGovern of South Dakota, who is one of the most outspoken opponents of the Ag-Land I Plan. The senator was unavailable for comment, however.

In a statement made last week, McGovern said: that he had been advised by Secretary of Agriculture, Bob Bergland, that Bergland will join him in asking that the Internal Revenue Service delay for as long as possible a ruling on the land purchase plan.

A news release from his office added: "The Ag-Land I Agricultural Land Purchase Plan would involve the purchase of prime row crop land using funds generated from in-

*"Ag-Land Trust is a financial scheme which may threaten the survival of the American family farm."*

— Rep. Fred Richmond

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## Grain feeding looks favorable

By DIETER KRIEG  
LANCASTER - Feeding grain to livestock, rather than selling it, is beginning to look more favorable again says Penn State's ag economist, H. Louis Moore.

"We're going back to a more traditional type of situation where feeding grain to livestock looks more favorable - but the feed bill will still not be cheap," Moore told a group of more than 200 swine producers this week. The occasion was the annual multi-county Swine Producers Day, held at the Farm and Home Center, here. Lancaster County

Agent Max Smith noted during the program that swine producers from four states and nearly a dozen counties were represented at the Extension-sponsored event.

Moore's predictions on hog prices for the next eight months was not as favorable as his grain-livestock review. He pegged April pork prices at \$31.75 per hundredweight; 37 for June, 41 in July, and 36.50 for October. A sample opinion poll from those in the audience indicated that hog producers are banking on



H. Louis Moore

significantly higher quotations on all counts.

"We are at a stage of the hog cycle when the numbers are peaking at very high levels," Moore commented. His observations and calculations show that there was and is a potential in this country to market 20 per cent more hogs than what actually show up at the sale barns. As a result of the high numbers, he expects prices to remain on the low side.

Moore blames this predicament on human nature. When the price looks good, producers jump at the

chance to make a little more money. Everybody gets the same idea and suddenly there's an oversupply.

The ag economist noted that as of Dec. 1, 1976, hog numbers all across the country were up by an average of 11 per cent; breeding stock had increased five per cent, and market hogs were up by 12 per cent.

"One of the things that really helped the hog market is that pork was such a good buy at the retail level," Moore said, adding that this has actually been helping

current market prices for farmers. "Consumers are really buying pork now, but I don't know how long it will last," he said.

Moore also pointed out that hog movements to markets have slowed down since late 1976, compared to last Fall when slaughter figures were up by 35 to 40 per cent over the previous year.

Showing statistics on trends in hog farm numbers, Moore showed that only some of the Southern states are recording increases in

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## Continued environmental awareness called for

By DIETER KRIEG  
QUARRYVILLE, Pa. - Dr. Maurice Goddard was in town Thursday night, causing a larger than usual turn-out for the annual meeting of the Octorara Watershed Association. Goddard is secretary of Pennsylvania's Department

of Environmental Resources. The group he addressed is composed of residents in lower southern Lancaster and Chester counties who are interested and concerned in protecting their land and water resources.

Noting that the membership of the Association is of a rural base, Goddard cited the farmer and his work as "a classic example" of how we can have improved conservation in the Commonwealth. His words of praise for farmers continued with: "To me the farmer typifies the classic

environmentalist and A-1 conservationist."

But the DER secretary wasn't in town to just pat farmers on the back. He also wanted to tell his audience of the progress his Department and related agencies have made in improving Pennsylvania's environment.

According to Goddard, both the air and water have been substantially cleaned up in the last few years. As proof, the environmental secretary noted that blue crabs are in the Schuylkill River near Philadelphia and several other formerly



Dr. Maurice Goddard

heavily polluted streams and rivers have been stocked with trout again for the first time in more than two generations.

Blue crabs, Goddard pointed out, are very sensitive to the quality of water they have - "they have to have good water!"

"The air is better too, no question about it," Goddard exclaimed before the gathering. One industrial plant in Steelton, he commented, is now collecting a ton of dust per hour which was formerly sent out over

town through the smoke-stack.

"Mines are safer," the DER secretary continued, telling of how Pennsylvania at one time had 500 to 800 miners killed annually. Describing mining and environmental legislation (Goddard's department is instrumental in both) he exclaimed "I think we can be proud of our laws."

Goddard was not as generous in his evaluation of federal environmental programs, arguing that it

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## AFBF calls for 5-year extension of ag act

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - The American Farm Bureau Federation, the nation's largest general farm organization, last week called for a five-year extension of the basic provisions of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973.

In a statement prepared for presentation at a House Agriculture Committee hearing on February 22,

Allan Grant, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, said Farm Bureau supports an extension provided that the Act is not amended in ways that would: (1) make farmers dependent on government payments on a continuing basis or (2) establish a government-controlled stockpile of agricultural commodities.

"We continue to believe

that government programs with respect to agriculture should be designed to create conditions which will permit farmers to operate under the market system," Grant said.

"Farm income has increased substantially since the market was relieved of the surpluses accumulated under previous programs. The market system is working. We have con-

fidence that it will continue to work."

The farm leader said Congress must: (1) Avoid setting target prices or loan rates at levels that will encourage excessive production; (2) Avoid loan levels that will result in the accumulation of a new government stockpile of surplus commodities; and (3)

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Allan Grant