

# Amish taxis may need insurance

By DIETER KRIEG

LANCASTER - The controversial issue smoldering at the present time between the Public Utilities Commission and "Amish taxi" operators could be a blessing in disguise, according to State Representative Gibson Armstrong who has kept a close eye on the matter.

The reason is a twist in insurance policies which would automatically void any vehicle owner's

coverage who uses his car or van for transporting the public. Some of the "Amish taxi" owners and operators are conducting their services under just such circumstances. The reason for nullification of policies is because different insurance rates apply for publically hired vehicles, including "Amish taxis." All that is needed to correct the matter is for such vehicle owners to not conceal their true status.

Otherwise insurance policies ceases at the moment of the accident, says Armstrong. The present controversy may cause operators to seek proper insurance coverage.

"This whole thing (controversy over unlicensed taxis for the Amish) may be very worthwhile after all," Armstrong told Lancaster Farming on Friday morning. "If we can prevent a lawsuit from happening, it will be a good thing," he added. "The Amish would not sue, but what about the other guy," he asked.

Armstrong advises unlicensed and uninsured

owners of the so-called Amish taxis to notify their insurance companies of the fact that their vehicles are up for hire. He stresses that such vehicle operators may think they're insured, but they're not when they're involved in an accident while carrying paying passengers.

Higher insurance rates will be applicable, Armstrong informed, but those expenses will be offset by the fact that this item then becomes a deductible expense. Also, a PUC licensed vehicle operator does not have to pay the state sales tax on his vehicle.

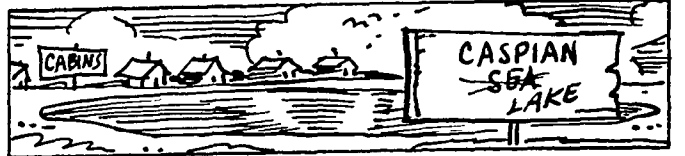
A meeting was held on Tuesday night in Refton during which an estimated 200 people came to hear both sides of the dispute. Most of the drivers involved are well meaning and perhaps unaware of the laws or insurance specifications, speakers pointed out. The Amish expressed concern over what all this may mean to future transportation services to them.

According to Armstrong, the Amish people themselves will not be affected too much, if at all.

He is still hopeful that the

PUC will grant some sort of exemption to Amish taxi operators, but urges prompt and proper insurance coverage.

The Lancaster County representative also said he expects the PUC to come out with another statement in the "very immediate future," possibly this weekend. As of Friday morning the PUC had not acted. The present status is that a 30 to 90 day "cooling off" period has been granted to permit involved drivers to register with the PUC.



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## Target prices set

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland has announced the 1977 target prices for wheat and feed grains.

Current legislation requires that target prices be adjusted from 1976 levels to reflect the increase in the index of prices paid by farmers for production items, interest, taxes and wage rates during 1976 as well as changes in the three-year moving average of yields for each crop.

The 1977 target prices are as follows: wheat - \$2.47; corn - \$1.70; barley - \$1.39.

Target prices represent a floor price that eligible producers may receive for their crops. If the national average market price for the particular crop falls below the target price, a deficiency payment is made equal to the difference between the target price and the market price. Deficiency payments have never been made on wheat, feed grains or upland cotton in the four years of the program.

Target prices are also used as a base to determine disaster payments should a natural disaster strike and

eligible producer's crop. Under such circumstances, disaster payments are paid if the producer is prevented from planting a crop or if yields are substantially reduced. The disaster payment rate is generally one-third of the target price for each commodity.

The Department also said that the 1977 loan rates it announced Oct. 13, 1976 for wheat, feed grains and soybeans are being reviewed and a decision on final loan levels for these commodities will be announced at a later date.

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