

Letters to the Editor

(Continued from Page 10)

single conversion of farmland today are the dam builders. Therefore, all agencies should be required to file their intentions with the Pennsylvania State Planning Board and show cause why a proposed facility or land use cannot be served in a non-agricultural area. Cost factors should be of minor consideration. In addition, a public hearing should be required in the community such taking is proposed prior to filing for Eminent Domain.

We in America should by now have become very conscious of the fact that all our natural resources are of a finite quantity. If not the gasoline and heating fuel crisis of a few years ago, then the nature gas crisis and the resultant closing of industrial plants very recently should have made us very mindful of the fact

that the horn of plenty has a bottom.

Pennsylvania is a vast Commonwealth with a total land area of 28.8 million acres. However, only 8 million acres of this is currently being farmed. On a portion of this total, agriculture under present market conditions is only marginally economically feasible. This represents 25 per cent of the total land area in agriculture leaving 75 per cent available for other uses.

Certainly with such a large portion of our state being non-agricultural, we can be more discreet in siting non-agricultural related land uses.

To cite some large non-agricultural uses of the land, permit me to cite a few that come to mind. Some are either constructed, under construction or proposed, but all are large users of land. Muddy Creek Dam in Lancaster County, Blue March Dam in Berks County. Also in Berks, the proposed Mill Creek Power

Plant and Reservoir near Hamburg, 5000 to 6000 acres, in Schuylkill County, the proposed Red Creek Reservoir, in Lehigh County, the Beltsville and Trexler Dams.

Along with these dams are attracted other non-agricultural land uses. Residential, commercial and industrial development follows.

I have attended all land use meetings in Berks County and have yet to hear any speaker mention the biggest culprit, Eminent Domain. All too frequently a costs benefits factor is the deciding factor. However,

who can place a cost benefits ratio on an unknown quality? Who will know the food needs a generation or two hence? Who can say that the recent trends worldwide toward droughts will not continue?

We have recklessly squandered our energy resources. Let us not, with the same abandon, squander our most finite resource, the land which furnishes us sustenance.

Let us be mindful that only 11 per cent of the land area of the world must support humanity now and in posterity.

Very Respectfully yours,
Harold R. Stoudt
Hamburg, Pa.

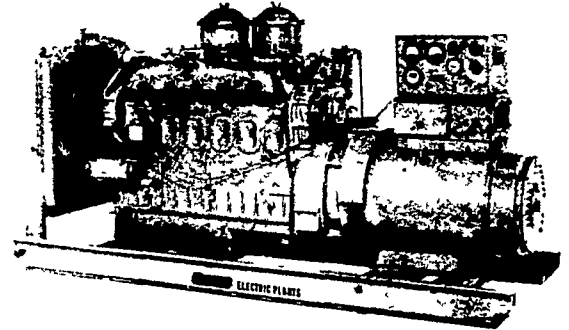
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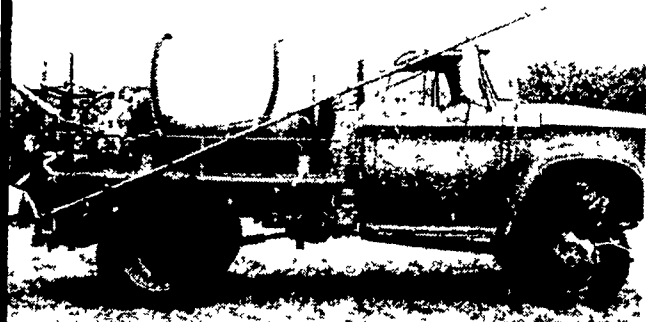
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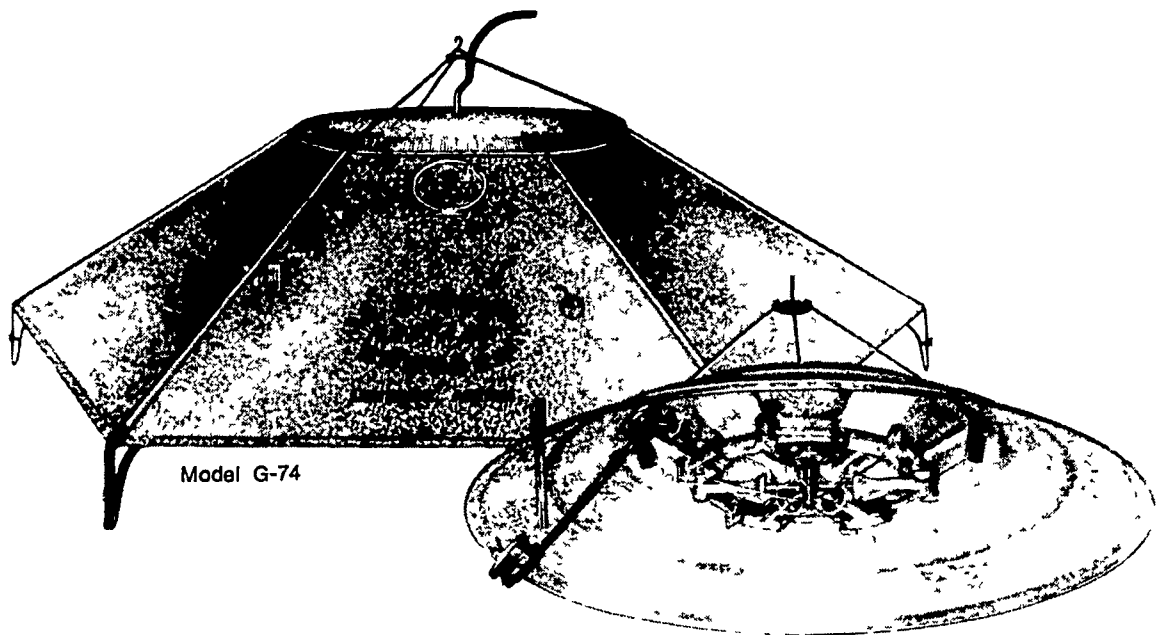
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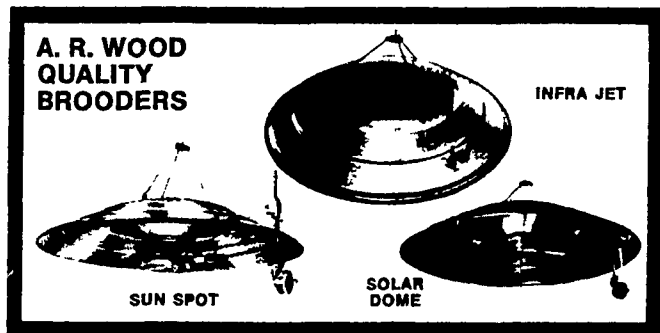
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