

Education is key to solving land-use problem

By DIETER KRIEG
LAURELVILLE, Pa. - It's pretty hard to convince people there's a farmland use crisis, because farmers are already producing more than the market needs, says Orland Gingerich, a Canadian farmer.

"The more we study this issue, the more problematic it becomes. There are no easy answers, Gingerich said. He was sharing his knowledge and views at a recently held "Affirmation of Farming" retreat, sponsored by the Mennonite

Church. Interested agriculturists from five states and Canada were in attendance for the weekend program.

Although Gingerich spoke of situations in Ontario, Canada, the problems he described were considered to be applicable for nearly all of North American farmland. Production is up, he said, and prices are down. That does not smack of a crisis situation to consumers and land-use legislation is therefore not easily dealt with. A survey showing that



Orland Gingerich

Canada has five acres of land per capita, compared to a world average of 1.2 acres per person further dilutes the impression many Canadians have of land-use.

That is not to say, however, that a land-use problem doesn't exist, or that it isn't officially recognized. The Canadian government is making attempts to protect its

agricultural resources. Only eight per cent of the Canadian land mass is suitable for agriculture.

Gingerich told the gathering that the land use problem is not just a farm issue. "It involves us all and is vital to our living, like air," he said. A concept which is and must be considered world-wide, the Canadian farmer cited European countries as examples where land was being used wisely. Villages are often on hillsides, while fertile farmland in the valleys is preserved.

Gingerich claimed that land use can be closely tied to the energy problem, since intensive farming methods are generally employed for maximum food production. A university study cited by Gingerich supports that view, and concludes that a return to "old practices" such as crop rotation would lessen some of the strain now being put on farmland.

The key to solving the land-use problem is education, the Canadian farmer affirmed. He noted that rural people who moved in from the cities often do not understand farm problems.

They complain about manure odors, for example, and yet fail to understand manure's value as a fertilizer.

Gingerich believes that if

people are made aware of the problems, and given an understanding of them, a major obstacle to land-use planning will have been overcome.

Milk marketing council commended

HARRISBURG, Pa. - Secretary of Agriculture Kent D. Shelhamer this week congratulated the officers and trustees of the Keystone Milk Marketing Council, Inc., for their promotional efforts on behalf of Pennsylvania-produced milk throughout the Commonwealth.

"The promotional program of the Keystone Milk Marketing Council has supplied the local level impact needed to increase the effectiveness of national and regional efforts," Shelhamer said. "The council has done an outstanding job of coordinating local promotional efforts, concentrating on the state dairy princess program and special events at shopping malls and other public places."

The Keystone Milk Marketing Council, Inc. is an independent organization which represents farmers' organizations, milk cooperatives, independent producers, and other individuals interested in helping Pennsylvania maintain a viable dairy industry. The council is funded by promotion programs from Federal Orders 2, 4, and 36 agencies, as well as membership dues and organizations in the remaining counties of the state.

"Milk promotion programs have grown rapidly in Pennsylvania and the northeast in recent

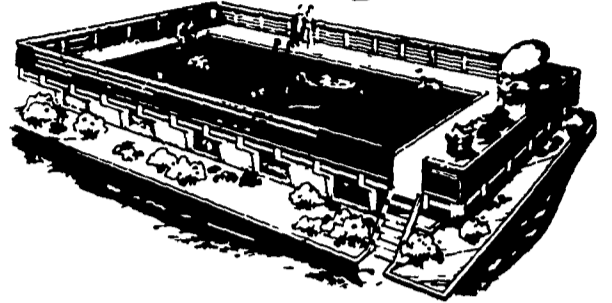
years, and have had substantial success in slowing the decline in per capita milk sales," Shelhamer noted. "In fact, per capita consumption of total fluid milk showed a slight upturn in 1975."

Officers and trustees for 1977 were elected at a recent council meeting. Donald Duncan, a Berks County dairy farmer, was elected president of the council. Other officers include E. Wayne Bashore, Cumberland County, vice president; Barbara Gross, Venango County, secretary; and Robert Morris, Centre County, treasurer.

Shelhamer said that the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Markets assists the Keystone program through its marketing and promotion specialists, helping to coordinate local events. Again this Summer, the 1976-1977 state dairy princess, Peggy Staub of Cumberland County, will be making appearances at malls and stores, as well as television and radio appearances.

The Keystone Milk Marketing Council, Inc. has recently held meetings across the state to discuss the operation of effective local milk promotion programs. Their activities do not duplicate national or regional promotions sponsored by the American Dairy Association or the Dairy Council, which stresses milk education.

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