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Stormwater mismanagement a problem for farmers

By KENDACE BORRY

MOUNT JOY - Progress is supposed to mean steps forward and improvement in the way of life but this doesn't always seem to be the case. A good example is what happens to stormwater management as more and more of the countryside is covered with buildings and concrete.

According to Henry Hackman, consultant for the Lancaster County Conservation District.

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mismanagement of storm water can cause damage to fields, lawns, and homes. One example of such an action that he cited is the occurrence of run-off water causing streams to overflow and banks to erode. He noted that small streams and stormwater channels are now carved into gorges due to excessive waterflow through their channels.

At a recent conservation meeting, Hackman told his audience that he considers it injustice to tax-paying citizens that one person's building projects are the cause of water damage to another person. "There are no rules or standards for stormwater management," he stated.

"We never had erosion like this until the development came along", Hackman pointed out while showing a slide of one built-up area in Lancaster County that adjoins prime farmland. "This is why we need storm water management law and plain management law SB 743 and SB 744."

For a more complete story on this proposed legislation, see the article in this week's Lancaster Farming.

One example of such a problem is happening on the Glenn Snyder farm, near Mount Joy. What was once farmland adjoining his land has now been turned into the Rapho Industrial Park.

According to Snyder, his problems started about five years ago when the buildings started going up. The field he works which is next to the industrial center started giving him trouble.

"The water from rainfall gathers in a pool at a low spot in the land which borders my land", Snyder explained. "Then it comes over on my land, stays there. and makes the center of my 12 acre field too wet to work."

The result is manyfold. Snyder tell of trucks getting stuck in the field when trying to harvest, of not being able to get into the field to work his crop because of conditions being too wet, and of a hand-dug well nearby which becomes muddy, with the result that his cattle won't drink.

"I could put a grassland waterway through the center of the field, but then the water would just go into another field," Snyder ad-ded, In his words, that would just be moving the problem from one spot to another.

According to Henry Hackman, there is no law as of now to cover what is happening on the Snyder farm. "This is mismanaged water," he stated. "It's not covered under the Clean Stream Law. This is damage that occurs after the water leaves the property which is causing the problem."



Henry H. Hackman

Snyder, who said he is trying every angle to get the problem corrected, noted that he doesn't know what will happen next. "It seems to be a yearly problem," he admitted. "And every year it seems to be getting worse."

There are 45 acres of land involved in the industrial park. A spokesman for the managers of the park, Clabell Management Company, who state that they simply manage it for the owners, noted that they had been contacted about the problem.

"Henry Hackman has been to see us and we discussed the problem," Bill Horsi, representing the company, related. "And we (Turn to Page 138)

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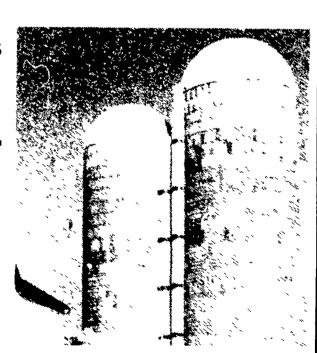
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