

Rural growth

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1½ hours of testimony, the zoning hearing board voted unanimously to allow construction of the poultry barn.

Gerhart notes with considerable satisfaction that his closest neighbors weren't among those who complained. His nearest neighbor resides in a home about 200 feet north of where the egg production facility will be. Gerhart will process and retail most of his eggs right off the farm.

Just how important it is, economically, for a farmer to do all he can for a favorable environment in and around the chicken house is illustrated by one of Jordan's studies at Penn State. The poultry specialist determined that "birds kept in a well-insulated, well-ventilated and well managed poultry houses can earn two to five times more net income or profit than birds housed improperly." The Penn Stater notes further that "many poultrymen get a large flock of layers to lay 20 dozen or 240 eggs per hen housed per year. With proper management all around, he claims production per hen per year can approach 300 eggs. But that requires paying attention to every detail, including manure handling and odor control.

There is another economic factor involved which en-

courages the farmer to handle his poultry manure properly. Says Jordan: "Poultry manure left in the house wet past seven days costs the poultryman about \$100 per 10,000 birds per day." To men like Weaver and Gerhart that could mean a loss of \$400 to \$500 per day. It's a loss which farmers can't afford.

The poultry specialist notes the values of poultry manure as fertilizer, claiming that it can be "one of the most profitable of all farm chemicals to sell."

Neither Weaver nor Gerhart have enough acreage of their own to be able to take care of the manure from their respective 50,000 and 45,000 bird houses. Neighboring farmers will buy the organic fertilizer from them.

According to a consensus of researchers' and poultry specialists' opinions, the public has nothing to worry about when a poultry house goes up near a residential area. The farmers have too much invested and too much to lose to allow sloppy management to spoil their livelihood. It isn't just public pressures that keep their environmental programs up to date; strong financial reasons are involved as well. Their bottom line is that poultry and people can live in the same area if the chicken houses are managed properly.

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present system, when it is discovered that a grower has problems in his herd, and he is given an indemnity for an animal, the price of all his hogs is lowered. But, with the indemnity money going to the packer, this problem should be alleviated because the packer has assurance that he will be fully protected.

Dr. Ingraham is quick to point out, however, that the indemnity will only be paid for hogs born or fed in Pennsylvania, and not for those trucked in from out of state for slaughter.

"The indemnity will depend upon the ability to go back to the farm," he says. "This will require that the animal is tattooed." A slap tattoo is thought to be the most effective and fastest method.

Therefore, markets will be indirectly required to tattoo their hogs, since packers will most likely refuse to buy anything but a tattooed animal.

When an animal is found to have TB, the state will use the tattoo as a trace to check out the problem. The packer will also be paid 67 per cent of market value for the animal.

Both packers and producers support the change, at this point.

"Packers are the total losers with TB hogs," says one involved individual. According to Dr. Ingraham, when a hog is passed for cooking, the meat has to be cooked at 170 degrees F. for 30 minutes which "turns the meat to mush." Because of this, the packer has little choice but to perhaps make scrapple from the meat.

"That's why he gets paid an indemnity for this type of animal," says Ingraham.

According to John Henkel, Strasburg, who is on the board of directors for both the Lancaster County and state swine producers organizations, the pork producers support the change.

"We feel we agree with this method," he says. "With the way they had it before (paying the indemnity to farmers), it got all messed up. And, with this method there will probably be a truer picture of what the problem is."

The hog producers are concerned about one aspect of the change.

"Our basic concern," states Henkel, "is that when pigs are tattooed, if the government wants to, it can put more pressure on sulfa residues because it's a better traceback. Although there are some sloppy hog farmers around who don't handle the drugs properly, I feel the sulfa problem isn't all the farmer's fault. There can be problems with equipment design or contaminated feed from somebody else if a bulk truck isn't emptied completely. Plus, the trucker can cause a problem if he had a load of hogs fed sulfa - just

from the manure the hogs can pick up enough sulfa to show up residues. It's very minute, but this is what bothers us."

Henkel, nonetheless, is resigned to the idea of tattooing.

"It's going to come sooner or later," he contends. "The federal government did say it will do further study."

At a meeting held last Tuesday concerning the proposed changes in in-

demnities, a representative from Washington did assure the group present that the tattooing won't have that great an effect on the sulfa problem.

At this point, the indemnity change is only in the beginning stages of becoming official - the Bureau is ready to have the bill properly sponsored. Ingraham expects that it will go before the houses in the Fall.



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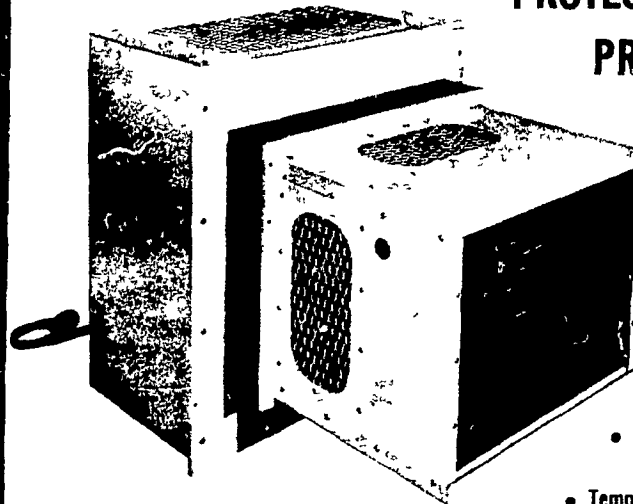
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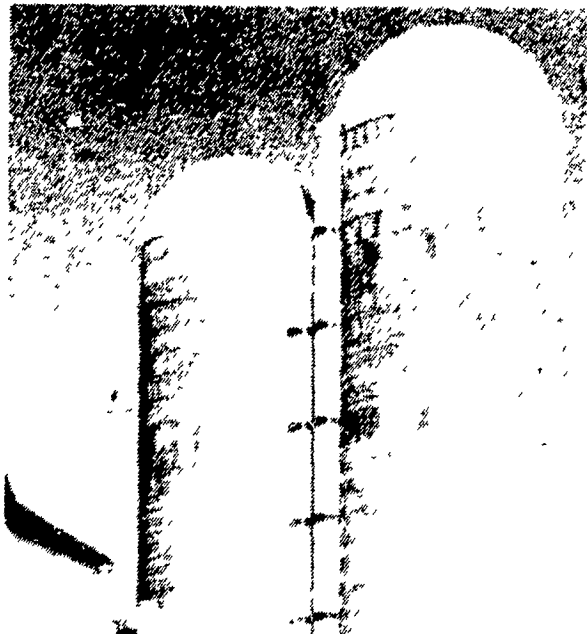
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