

# USDA sharpens land use assistance

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture have been directed to avoid proposing or assisting actions that could reduce the

amount of land available for food and fiber production. In signing a revised departmental land-use policy memorandum here recently, Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland said he expects department agencies to step up their assistance to local residents and local agencies in their efforts to retain important farmland, forestland, rangeland and wetlands and to avoid encroachment into flood plains.

"We will continue to recognize and respect the rights and responsibilities of landholders in making private land-use decisions," Bergland said. "But federal agencies oversee numerous programs that affect and sometimes encourage the irreversible conversion of important agricultural land to other uses.

"We want land-use decisions to respond to social and economic needs of local residents, but we also want to help protect the natural environment, develop high quality living space and assure adequate supplies of food, fiber, wood and water."

The memorandum orders all department agencies that administer grants, loans, regulations or technical assistance programs to review their actions and make any changes necessary to minimize program impacts that might reduce the amount of agricultural land.

Bergland also said the department will intercede in decision-making by other federal agencies where conversion of important agricultural lands is caused or enabled by those agencies' programs. "We will participate in planning when invited," said Bergland, "and we will review and comment on draft environmental impact statements and proposals for action."

"Responsible levels of government must encourage and facilitate the use of our nation's land resources with wisdom and foresight," the memorandum asserts. "This statement reflects the department's concern with the serious challenges the nation faces in retaining an adequate natural resource base and in meeting environmental, social and economic needs."

## Irrigation meeting

set for Nov. 29

NEWARK, Del. - A conference on the irrigation of farm crops will be held Wednesday, November 29, in the auditorium of Delaware Technical and Community College in Georgetown, Del. The event, which is sponsored by the Delaware Cooperative Extension Service, will start at 9 a.m. and adjourn at about 4:30 p.m.

This marks the second year such a conference has been held, and from all appearances it should be chock full of valuable information for the growing number of Delaware farmers who now irrigate their crops—especially corn and soybeans.

Opening with an assessment of the 1978 irrigated corn season, the morning session will also include a panel discussion on the prospects for corn borer control in the year ahead, plus talks on irrigation and soil fertility, the growth and development of the corn plant as this affects the timing of fertilization, and the role of the Soil Conservation Service in irrigation. One of the highlights of this session will be a tele-lecture by Dr.

Leroy Svec and Dr. James Specht of the University of Nebraska on the subject: "Irrigation of Soybeans - When, How Much, and Does It Pay?"

At noon, there will be a box lunch meal (for which reservations will be needed). Featured luncheon speaker will be Governor Pete duPont, speaking on the subject "Delaware Agriculture from the Governor's Desk."

The afternoon session will cover selecting a hybrid for 200 bushel corn, developing a fertility program through use of plant and soil analysis, applying herbicides with center pivot, and irrigation scheduling. A representative from Aqua Forces, Unlimited will discuss a new concept in pumping water. Dr. Don Tilmon, extension farm management specialist at the University of Delaware, will wrap up the conference with a few words on "Putting It All Together For '79."

For reservations for further information contact the extension office in Newark, Dover, or Georgetown, Del.



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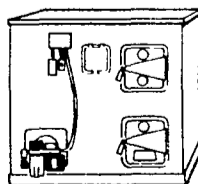
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