

Good ag zoning requires plenty of planning

By DIETER KRIEG
LANCASTER — "If you're going to live in an agricultural district, you're going to have to put up with the smell," is one of the ways John Keretzman describes the zoning ordinance which he enforces in Salisbury Township, Lancaster County. He notes that the measures were set up to protect the farmland and its inhabitants and anyone attempting to come into the area with developments would be "hard pressed to do so." Keretzman was one of several people who recently took part in a forum at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center to share and discuss agricultural zoning procedures and ideas.

Another one of the contributors of ideas was John

Heisey, a Mount Joy Township agribusinessman who charged that money is the reason a natural resource like land is destroyed. Lancaster County is losing 5000 acres of agricultural land annually. According to Lancaster County Agricultural Agent Jay Irwin, the people: acre ratio used to be 1:1 in Lancaster County, but is now favoring the population side.

Mount Joy Township has devised a method by which the population can be somewhat more contained, Heisey told the group. The procedure is to limit the number of building lots a farmer can sell off of his farm. An example, one lot may be sold from 25 acres of owned farmland. As acreages increase, however,

the number of lots do not increase in the same proportion. Instead, they lag behind.

Keretzman, the zoning officer in Lancaster County's second largest township, told the gathering that the number one goal of the Salisbury Township Planning Commission was to utilize prime soils for food production and protect the lifestyles of its inhabitants. Salisbury Township is essentially an agricultural area. Forty-one per cent of its farmland is comprised of Class I and II soils and of a limestone base, which, according to Keretzman, isn't suited for building because of problems with sinkholes, and groundwater pollution. Such conclusions gave planners a head start in constructing a strong agricultural zoning concept.

Keretzman continued that the zoning plan in Salisbury Township calls for 66 per cent of the township's Class I and II soils to be used for agriculture. The remaining third may be used for rural development.

"There was little opposition to the plans when they were presented," Keretzman noted, holding up carefully drawn and color-coded maps which showed the township's soil locations, watershed, and other facts pertinent to land-use planning. While there was little opposition to plans, there was some when it came to the actual zoning, Lancaster County's only zoning officer continued. "The Amish people and farmers in general don't like zoning," Keretzman explained.

Nonetheless, the preservation of agricultural farmland is a legitimate goal, Keretzman declared. To be of value, agricultural zoning should work hand in hand with watershed and flood plain management. Also, according to the Pennsylvania Planning Code, a township must provide room for all types of zoning — residential, industrial, agricultural, commercial, etc.

In Mount Joy Township, a farmer wanting to build a barn must have at least a 300-foot set-back from other existing dwellings which aren't a part of his farm. On open land, the building may be as little as 50 feet from neighboring properties, said Heisey. It was pointed out, however, that in any case, the farmer should show consideration for both his farm and non-farm neighbors.

Zoning, no matter how it's implemented, will have an effect on the value of the land, said David Schreffler, another one of the resource people who took part in Extension Service sponsored forum. Also, special variances are required if a farmer decides to convert a tobacco shed into a church or apartment dwelling.

According to Lancaster County Agricultural Agent Jay Irwin, who moderated the meeting, agriculture is America's fastest growing despite the continual disappearance of some of the nation's best farmland. Lancaster County's land is considered to be among the best in the world. Pointing



John Heisey
Mt. Joy Township
Lancaster County

out that the average American farmer feeds 63 people besides himself, compared with the communist system in the Soviet Union needing one farmer to feed five others, Irwin asked for programs which will protect farming interests Lancaster County especially

due to its leading position on the American farming scene. The County is first in agricultural production among non-irrigated counties in the United States.

According to Robin Ream, who is the Extension Service's land use agent in Lancaster County, the

preservation of Lancaster County farmland is a complex issue. Actions would include political, planning, and socio-economic processes and studies. Also of importance are the land's aesthetic values — the pleasures one derives from driving through beautiful farmland or purchasing fresh products at a roadside market, for example.

"What we have must be preserved," says Bob Behling of the Lancaster County Planning Commission. Lancaster County currently has 65 per cent of its land in farming. The Lancaster County Planning Commission projects that that will dwindle down to 44.5 per cent by the year 2000. The Commission has land-use and road plans to guide rural development.

While land-use plans are definitely being considered on the county level, much of the real control is on the township level, says Behling. Lancaster County has 41 townships with all but one — East Drumore Township — having zoning ordinances. East Drumore, however, is planning for such ordinances.

Agricultural zoning is not a no-growth policy, Behling emphasized.

Also, according to Behling, the ownership of land does not give a farmer the right to sell it as a high profit, he concluded.



John Keretzman
Salisbury Township
Lancaster County

York Co. team wins judging

HARRISBURG - The York County 4-H "A" team won first place in team awards total judging at the first annual Keystone Junior Livestock and Meats Judging Contest held in conjunction with the 22nd Keystone International Livestock Exposition at the Farm Show complex in Harrisburg.

The York County 4-H "A" team scored a total of 1656 points and won \$100, as well as outscored York County's 4-H "B" team which took third place with \$80 and 1543 points. Taking second place and \$90 was the Newcastle, Del., 4-H team with 1545 points. Cumberland County's 4-H team took sixth place with 1482 points.

The Avella FFA team from Washington County took eighth place; the Lehigh County 4-H team took ninth place; and the Penns Valley FFA from Centre County took tenth place.

Winners of the Keystone Junior Stockman of the Year Award was Harris Wright, Abbottstown R1, who received a \$500 savings bond and a trophy. Lisa Dobrosky of Glenn Rock R2, took second place and won a \$250 savings bond and a trophy. Third place winner was Brenda Werner of Hanover R2, who received a \$100 savings bond and a trophy.

The ten highest placing contestants in overall individual scores were eligible for the Junior Stockman's award and were scored on their showmanship ability in beef, sheep and swine classes.

Harris Wright was first in individual scoring with 567 points and won \$50, followed by Ray Holtry of Cumberland County with 588 and \$45. Brenda Werner won \$40 for third place with 557 points, and Lisa Dobrosky was fourth with 555 points and won \$35.

The highest individual scores for judging retail cuts of meat were Lisa Dobrosky and Christine Sunday, both of York County, and each scoring 198, Steve Trossle with 192 points and Brenda Walter with 185 points, each from York County, and Paula Deitch of the Cum-

berland County FFA with 182 points.

The contest, a new youth activity at the Livestock Expo, was open to all 4-H and FFA members and was established by the Pennsylvania Livestock Association as an educational activity.

The Keystone Junior Livestock and Meats Judging Contest was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Livestock Association in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Farm Show Commission.

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In the previous Christmas programs, thousands of pieces of mail, primarily Christmas cards with friendly letters and notes written inside, have been collected from the public. This mail in turn has been distributed all across the U.S. and around the world, to let our young

military people know that we as Americans, both as individuals and as the American public at large, DO care about them. (If you have a friend or relative in military service, who would appreciate some extra mail at Christmas, send in the name and address, and M.O.M. will see that some mail is sent to them.)

This is an ideal Christmas project for individuals and families as well as members of groups (student and church groups, etc.). For information on how you or your group may participate in this very worthwhile event, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: MILITARY OVERSEAS MAIL, Box 1797, Baltimore, Maryland 21203. Also, please mention how you learned of M.O.M.

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