

Loans for farm energy sources win approval

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry last week voted to authorize \$180 million in new federally-guaranteed loans for construction of pilot plants to produce fuel from agricultural commodities and forest products.

The Committee action would greatly expand a section of the Food and

Agriculture Act of 1977, recently implemented by the Department of Agriculture, which authorized guaranteed loans for four such plants not to exceed \$15 million each.

Thursday's Committee action, which grew out of a proposal sponsored by Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.), would increase the total loan authorization that USDA

could guarantee by \$180 million without stipulations as to the size of the individual loans.

Other requirements of the 1977 Act, however, would remain in effect for loan-guarantee eligibility. One requirement is that research must indicate that the total energy content of the products or by-products to

be produced by the pilot project must exceed the fossil fuel required to produce them.

The four loan guarantees already approved by USDA under the original law total \$42.7 million. The pilot projects involve different energy sources utilizing agricultural commodities and forest products.

However, none of the

approved plants would produce alcohol from grain used in a mixture of gasoline and alcohol known as gasohol. Several members of the Agriculture Committee expressed interest in the financing of pilot plants using grains under the proposed expansion program.

The expanded energy pilot plant program was added as

an amendment to a bill (S.892) extending for two years the spending authorization for title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972. The bill authorizes up to \$20 million annually for continued rural development and small farm research and extension work.

The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Pesticide limitations are designed to protect

NEWARK, Del. — Restrictions on the use of pesticides and the Delaware applicator certification program pose no real problems for the home gardener, according to John S. McDaniel, Extension specialist in agricultural chemicals at the University of Delaware.

State and federal legislation limiting the sale and use of pesticides is designed to protect users, consumers, and the environment. The legislation requires that both commercial and private applicators who use highly toxic or hazardous pesticides, which are on restricted lists, pass certification examinations.

Most home gardeners will find that certification is unnecessary, although some large-scale hobby gardeners, such as Christmas tree farmers and home nurserymen, do become

certified so that they can use restricted chemicals.

McDaniel points out that many unrestricted pesticides, which present little danger to humans, pets, and the environment when used according to label specifications, are available

for private use. "Certification makes the lot of home gardeners easier because it takes highly toxic pesticides out of their hands," he says.

A few pesticides that were widely used by home gardeners in the past are no

longer registered for such uses. However, alternatives adequate for home garden pest problems are available.

Agricultural users who want to become certified to apply restricted pesticides on property they own or rent must pass the level

examination given by the Delaware Department of Agriculture.

The core level examination is detailed; it covers, among other things, knowledge of pest control problems and control practices, the law, safety

hazards, environmental contamination, and the use of equipment. The certification program is not, however, unduly restrictive, according to McDaniel. "Those who are competent to use highly toxic pesticides are competent to pass the test," he says.

Pa. farm vacation directories available

HARRISBURG -- A directory of Pennsylvania's farm vacation spots is now available to the public through the Pennsylvania Department's Bureau of Rural Affairs, according to State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell.

The directory includes information of members of the Pennsylvania Farm Vacation Association, an organization of farmers who provide unique vacations for individuals and families who

are looking for a chance to relax or to "get back to nature." Although few in number (26 members at present), the association has enjoyed considerable success in attracting city and suburban vacationers in recent years.

Hallowell said that a farm vacation is a "good year round alternative to the typical 'look quick or you'll miss it' tours." He said farm vacations "provide a great taste of rural life, from the

clean country air to the smell of good old-fashioned country cooking."

The Secretary said the increased emphasis on behalf of the Agriculture Department should let farmers as well as city residents see the benefits of such a program. He said the idea was a positive first step in helping farmers increase their income without seeking jobs off the farm. "Many Pennsylvania farmers have had a difficult time making ends meet through farming alone," he explained.

The farms feature a wide variety of locations, rates and accommodations. All are inspected and approved by the Pennsylvania Farm Vacation Association to insure the vacationer's satisfaction with a stay on the farm.

The directory includes a map of the commonwealth

which show the location of the member farms, along with the major access routes across the state. Hallowell noted that even the most secluded Pennsylvania farms are located within a short drive of some of the most scenic and historic areas in the nation.

More information and copies of the Farm Vacation Directory can be obtained by writing to FARM VACATIONS, Bureau of Rural Affairs, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA, 17120, or by calling 717-783-8460.

Seeds are available for gardens

LANCASTER — Seed packages containing ten different kinds of vegetable seeds are available for 50 cents a package at the Office of Aging.

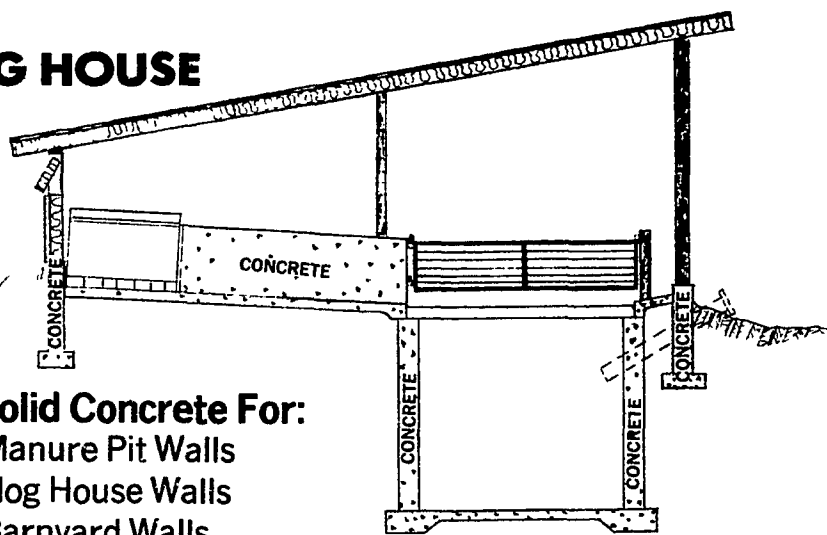
The packages are provided through the Governor's Anti-Inflation Garden Program and can be purchased by persons of any age.

Each package contains corn, carrots, radishes, squash, lettuce, peas, beets, turnips, cucumbers and beans.

The seeds are available throughout the County at the Senior Centers or CAP offices and at the Office of Aging in the new courthouse, 50 N. Duke Street, Lancaster.

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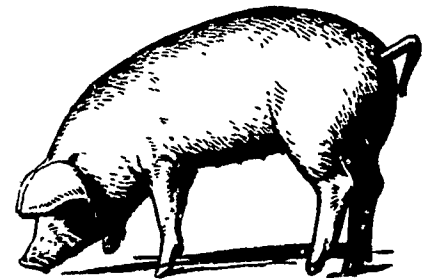
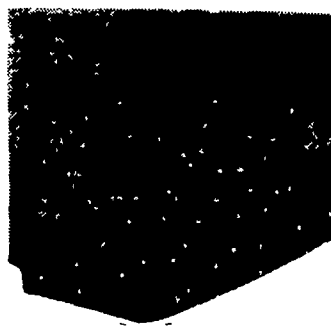
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