

York County PFA meeting

**Snyder addresses
"right to farm" issues**

MENGES MILLS - Some 250 members and guests turned out for the annual meeting of the York County Farmers' Association, held Thursday, October 4 at Colonial Valley.

Featured speaker of the evening dinner meeting was state deputy secretary of agriculture, J. Luther Snyder. Snyder, formerly head of the state Grange for over 12 years, oversees the regulatory agencies under the jurisdiction of the agriculture department.

"Just a few months ago, I was pointing fingers at the bureaucracy," he commented. "And now I'm on the other side of the fence."

While current focus on the preservation of the family farm is important, Snyder says that preservation of the farmer himself is far more crucial. Because agriculture is the second largest industry in Pennsylvania, Snyder says that the state is looking at several key "right to farm" issues.

Taxation of farmland is the focus of proposed legislation aimed at assessment on use, rather than market value, especially for estate settlement. Too frequently, farmland must be sold to simply pay the tax bill.

Nuisance lawsuits, being levied against farm operations by both urban-oriented neighbors and environmental agencies, are also being studied by the state ag officials. Proposed ag districting measures would include exemptions from such nuisance suits. A producer security fund for the dairy industry is another prime concern of the ag bureau, although various dairy cooperatives and organizations are at odds on the methods of handling such a fund.

The disposal of state-owned farms, says Snyder, is being considered, with

officials eyeing proposals to eventually turn these Justice department farms back into private ownership. Theoretically, they could be put under the ag department's jurisdiction for long-term lease, and possible eventual sale, to young farmers starting out.

Snyder also mentioned briefly some of the bureaus he oversees and their key functions. Foods and Chemistry specialists monitor food quality from its beginnings on the farm until final retail consumer sales. Under the Bureau of Weights and Measures, inspectors monitor the Commonwealth's weighing devices. Converting service stations to half-gallon sales was a most recent assignment; and officials are now studying the possibility of going to the metric system in fuel sales.

Although intensive lobbying efforts for a new Farm Show complex have been underway for the past several years, Snyder told his York County farm audience that the "cost of government" precludes a new complex. Improvements on the present structure, however, will continue and efforts are being stepped-up to add even more exhibits to the present schedule.

Included in the increased exhibit schedule will be shows geared to international farm trade. The state's ag officials list economic development through increased international marketing as their most important cause. A development of a "Pennsylvania products logo" is the first advertising step in the push to sell more Commonwealth-produced foodstuffs around the globe.

Four new directors were elected to the board during the annual business meeting. Serving for three-year terms

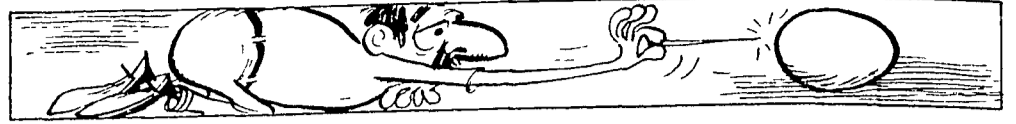
are Charles Hess, York R2, representing District 3, John Wilcox of New Park, District 5, George Shue, Brodbeck's R1, District 8 and Karen Laughman, Thomasville R2, director at large.

County members were commended for their participation in the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association's cooperative-type supplies purchase of Safemark products. York County finished with the highest dollar volume in the program.

During committee reports, local affairs chairman Lou Wambaugh briefed members on the association's efforts on dairymen Dennis McWilliams, whose farm is included in the controversial sewage landspray plans in Springfield Township. He noted that meetings with agency and legislator representatives on the sewage plans are continuing.

State director Carolyn Rutter spoke on the recent state legislative tour, which focused on issues of marketing-bargaining, the ethics bill, Clean and Green amendments, and land use policies including the formation of voluntary ag districting.

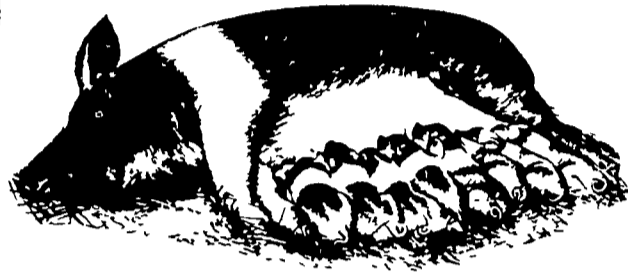
Two new advisory councils have been formed, one in the east York-Hallam area and one in the Airville area, according to chairman Aileen Detter. Other committee reports were given by Ethel Gross, membership, Sam Taylor, the Safemark program, and Kay Taylor, whose health van committee has signed up 120 individuals for medical check-ups during October.



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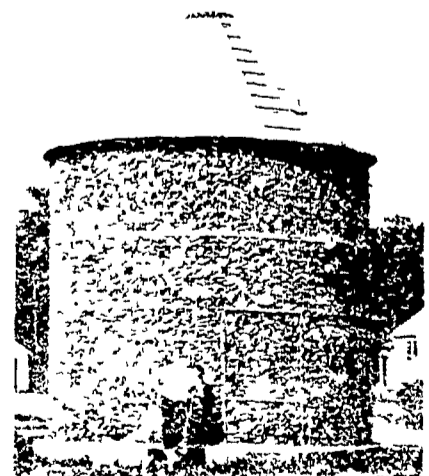
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