

Walker introduces Farmland Preservation Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In an effort to respond to the serious problem of vanishing American farmland, Congressman Bob Walker Wednesday introduced "The Farmland Preservation Act of 1979."

The legislation would provide tax incentives to farmland owners who agree not to use or permit their land to be used for any purpose other than farming.

"Farmland is one of our nation's major natural resources and south central Pennsylvania has been hailed as the garden spot of the world for its rich, fertile soil. Yet each year over three million acres of farmland nationwide are lost to the encroachment of industry and urbanization.

"This is a strong measure

which is needed to prevent serious agricultural land shortages due to the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use," he said.

Walker's interest in preserving farmland was first expressed in similar legislation he introduced in the 95th Congress. That legislation grew from his work with area agricultural leaders and public officials, including Amos Funk of Millersville.

The new bill was described as a modification of the original proposal which embodies the same principles of individual decision-making about agricultural deed restrictions but simplifies the procedures along the lines suggested by H.H. Haverstick of Lancaster.

Under the Walker proposal, a system of tax exemptions on capital gains when the property is sold would encourage owners of farmland to agree to limit the future use of their land for agricultural purposes only.

The owner of the farmland would be eligible for a capital gains tax exemption by signing an agreement with the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture formalizing a permanent commitment to keeping the land in agricultural production.

"This legislation represents federal action entirely compatible with the ongoing local and state efforts in our area and in Pennsylvania to preserve our farms," Walker said.

"I believe this proposal is

a sensible approach to farmland preservations," commented the Pennsylvania lawmaker.

"It assures that farmland is preserved on the basis of individual landowner initiatives, not on the basis of arbitrary regulations issued by Washington bureaucrats

"It provides incentives for restricting the use of farmland to agricultural production without jeopardizing the zoning provisions of local government, or more importantly, the property rights of individual Americans," he said.

October milk up

HARRISBURG — Milk production in Pennsylvania during October 1979 totaled 667 million pounds, up two percent from a year earlier according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

The number of milk cows in the Commonwealth during October was 684,000 head,

down 16,000 head from the previous year.

Milk production per cow averaged 975 pounds in October, up 40 pounds from a year ago.

United States milk production during October 1979 totaled 10.1 billion pounds, up three percent from October 1978.



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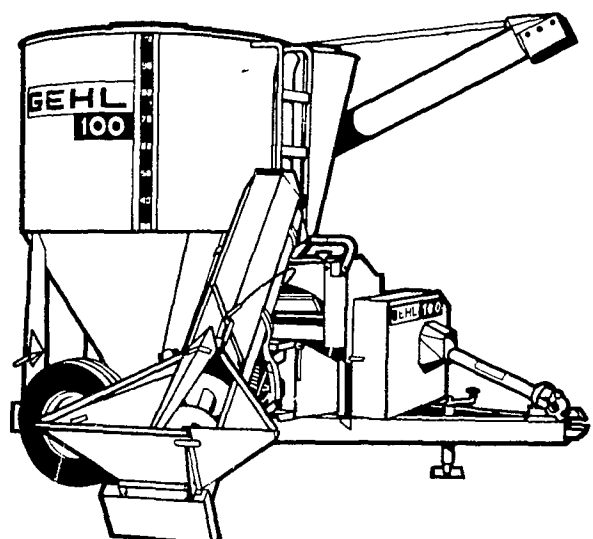
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