

Is Delaware losing farmland?

NEWARK, Del. — Is Delaware in danger of losing enough of its vital agricultural land to non-farm use that something should be done about it?

The Delaware Extension Service has launched an educational program aimed at increasing public awareness of critical land use issues in the state—to inform state residents of what is happening locally to this valuable natural resource, as well as to acquaint them with some of the ways people in other states are dealing with this complicated subject.

To help develop this program, two meetings — one for farmers and the other for non-farmers — have been scheduled to explore the issue of agricultural land preservation in Delaware.

The day-long farm meeting will be held January 31 starting at 9:30 a.m. at the Capitol Grange Hall in Dover.

Topics to be discussed include an overview of the national problem of farmland preservation and an update of the land use situation in Delaware.

Also on the program are discussions of individual landowner rights as they relate to land owned; a look at several methods being tried in the Northeast to slow down conversion of farmland; and a means of compensating landowners or loss of full market value when land is restricted to agricultural use.

Representatives of the Delaware Farm Bureau and the Delaware State Grange will present their groups' positions on farmland preservation, and representatives of the New Castle County Planning Department will describe a proposal for creating an agricultural zone.

There will also be a discussion of the system of agricultural districting in use in Isle of Wight County, Va.

The non-farm meeting will take place February 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the State Highway Department building across from the Blue Hen Mall in Dover. This meeting is intended

primarily for developers, realtors, representatives of chambers of commerce, businesses and industries, and other non-farm users of agricultural land.

Subjects to be covered at this meeting include agricultural land use in Delaware and the role of agriculture in the state's economy; the relationship between individual landowner rights and land use attitudes of Delawareans; and some of the alternative methods of farmland preservation being practiced in various parts of the Northeast.

There will be presentations on the purchase of development rights by David F. Newton, land use management specialist in Suffolk county N.Y., and by

Allen Musselman, executive director of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation.

A third speaker, assistant planner Gregory A. Bowen, will explain how the transfer of development rights works in Calvert County, Md.

During the afternoon session, representatives of the New Castle County Planning Office will present their proposal for creating an agribusiness district.

These preliminary meetings should help identify problems and possible alternatives for further discussion in the spring when the Extension Service holds public county level educational workshops on the future of Delaware's agricultural lands.

Livestock operator charged under P&S Act

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Samuel Berkowitz, formerly doing business as North Franklin Commission Sales, North Franklin, Conn., has been charged with violating payment, trust account and recordkeeping requirements of the Packers and Stockyards Act.

The firm, not operating at this time, did business in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Southern Massachusetts. Berkowitz is registered as a market agency to sell livestock on a commission basis and as a dealer to buy and sell livestock for his own account.

In an administrative complaint filed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Berkowitz is charged with:

—Having shortages of as much as \$429,969 in his custodial account for shippers' proceeds;

—Issuing insufficient funds checks and failing to pay when due the proceeds due to consignors of livestock;

—Failing to pay when due for livestock purchases, and

—Failing to keep accounts and records which fully and correctly disclose all transactions

Berkowitz has a right to a hearing. If the evidence

supports the charges, he would be placed under a cease and desist order, and his registration could be suspended.

The P&S Act is a fair trade practices law. It promotes and maintains fair and open competition in marketing of livestock, meat and poultry.



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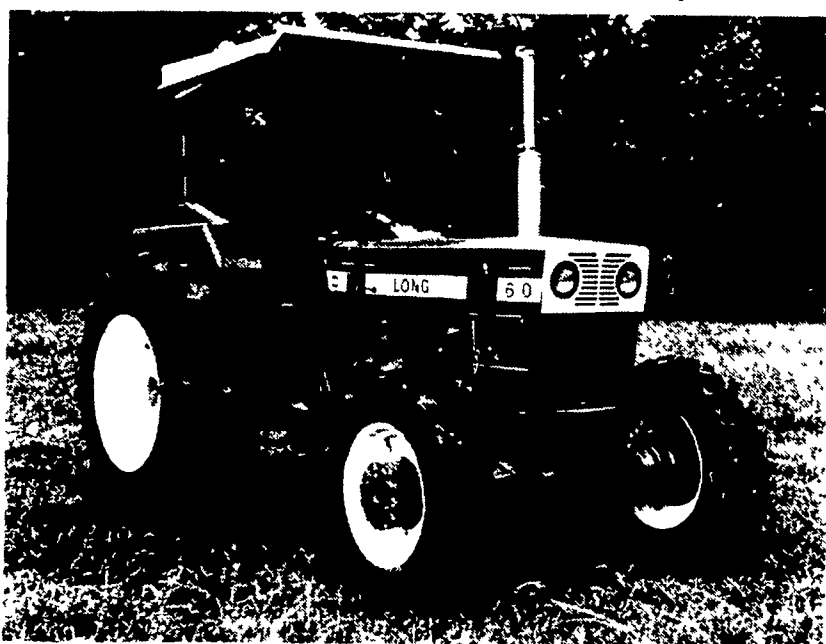


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