Legislative roundup Welfare farms to transfer to PDA

By DICK WANNER

HARRISBURG — Lots of behind the scenes action this week in the Capitol as the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Public Welfare and the Department of Justice all took careful looks at House Bill 1535, a lands management bill, which would transfer responsibility for stateowned farmland from Welfare to Agriculture.

outside state hospitals, and for many years were tended by patients who grew food for the people living in the hospitals.

Court rulings over the past decade have virtually eliminated stoop labor therapy, and the Welfare farms are now being run out of a department headed by a

secretary, Helen O'Bannon, whom are members of the who thinks they'd be better placed with the secretary of agrıculture.

Governor Thornburgh is in agreement with his welfare chief, and so is Secretary of Agriculture Penrose Hallowell. It will be a complicated transfer involving thousands of acres, millions of dollars worth of equipment and buildings, and 135 state employees, most of

169; Dauphin - 104; Chester -

110; Adams - 207; York - 300;

Cumberland - 213; Butler -

223; Bradford - 210; and

Washington - 297. SM.

American Federation of State and Municipal Employees

Agriculture has also announced its willingness to accept any lands deemed surplus by the Department of Justice, which operates farms in conjunction with a number of the state prisons.

Justice's farm chief, Robert Williams, does not believe they will be declaring any lands surplus. And while he feels the Welfare farms might be better placed with the Department of Agriculture, he does not believe the prison farms, with their convict labor force, should be taken out of the Department of Justice.

Noxious Weed Bill

A Grange supported measure which has yet to be assigned a bill number would simplify the mechanism for pinning noxious weed labels on really troublestome plant pests.

Presently, the legislature must approve and the governor must sign noxious weed legislation.

That is a cumbersome system, at best, and probably accounts for the fact that only one weed, Canada thistle, holds the solitary distinction of being an official public enemy.

State Grange Master Charles Wismer would like to see multiflora rose and johnsongrass added to that list. Incredibly enough, Wismer said, the Pennsylvania Game Commission is still seiling multiflora rose plants for use as wildlife shelters.

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A casual observer's impressions of state government as slow and unwieldly could have been shattered in a meeting on Monday in the office of Senate Ag Committee chairman Pat Stapleton.

The meeting was lightning-fast and efficient. It opened at noon and adjourned ten minutes later after the committee members present had voted to put on the floor of the Senate three different bills.

They were:

Clean and Green

House Bill 725 would amend Act 319, the Clean and Green Act, to allow preferential tax treatment to continue when forest or farmland is divided for sale as long as the parcels sold continue in open space uses. The measure passed the House by a vote of 164 to 5 on October 31.

Alien Ownership

HB 1778 would restrict the acquisition of farmland by non-citizens. Neither alien nor foreign governments could aqure an interest in any agricultural land exceeding 100 acres. Passed the House on December 5 by 185 to 4 vote.

Inheritance Taxes

HB 1176 would amend Act 319, Clean and Green again, to allow use value assessment, rather than market value, at the time an estate is settled It would provide safeguards to insure that the land would continue in agriculture. Passed the House on October 23 by 140 to

N)

Lancaster Co. highest in state

Beeferendum registration nears 10,000

HARRISBURG - The number of eligible farmers who registered to vote in the upcoming beef referendum totalled 9790 on Thursday morning, reported Richard Pennay, Agricultural Program Specialist for the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

The registration period officially closed Wednesday afternoon.

Although their normal records management system required them to discard the 1977 referendum files, Pennay said he feels the turn out for this referendum exceeded the previous one.

The county with the largest number of registrants was Lancaster County, with 479 cattle

WASHINGTON, D.C. -

Proposed changes in

regulations governing the Agricultural Foreign In-

vestment Disclosure Actwhich would alter the

reporting requirement for foreign investors-were

announced Friday by Ray Fitzgerald, administrator of

the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural

Stabilization and Con-

would raise from five to

twenty percent the

terest or substantial con-

"combination," they mean

servation Service.

owners. The next highest are: Berks - 320; Lebanon number was in Franklin County, where 375 people signed up to vote.

Pennay noted the big days were Monday through Wednesday of this week, even though the registration period began on January 28.

"In Lancaster County, for example, there were less than 100 registered last Friday, and now there are close to 500," Pennay added.

Most of those who registered to vote in the Beeferendum requested to use the mail ballots. Pennay said the county ASCS offices are busy getting ready to send out the ballots and the rules for the voting period of February 19-22.

Several other county totals

governments who are acting

The other change would generally exempt all agricultural, forestry and

tumber land not exceeding 10 acres in the aggregate from

reporting requirements. However, if products grown

on these under-10-acre tracts yield annual gross sales of

more than \$1000, the land

must be reported to ASCS,

proposals which appeared in

the January 25 Federal

Comments should be

Room 218-W, P.O. Box 2415,

Fitzgerald said the public

Fitzgerald said.

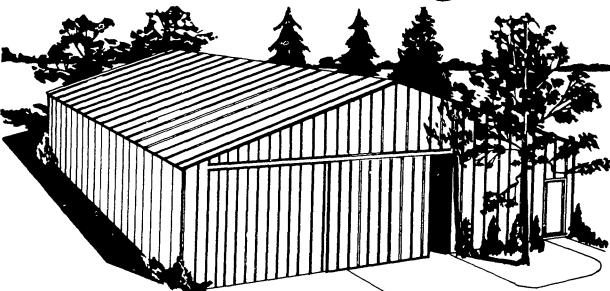
USDA seeks to change

foreign disclosure act

ın concert.

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YORK 717-792-2674

In his new position, Kennedy assumed his duties with the American

Friday.

AVONDALE 215-268-2043

DUBLIN

TANEYTOWN 301-848-3225

only a group of individuals or Washington, D.C. 20013. Kennedy to manage local soybean office

Fitzgerald said one change is invited to comment on the

aggregate foreign interest in Register. Deadline for

a company. That would submitting written com-

trol," and make clear that addressed to the ad-

when regulations refer to a ministrator, USDA-ASCS,

constitute "significant in- ments is March 25.

HEBRON, Md. - Jerry Kennedy of Hebron, Maryland, has been named field services regional manager by the American Soybean Association according to Jeffrey W. Gain, ASA executive director of Government Relations and Field Services.

Kennedy will assist state soybean associations and promotion boards in their activities and programs.

The newly created regional office will be located in Salisbury, Maryland, and will work with sovbean organizations in Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Soybean Association last

215-249-3556

CHAPMAN 215-395-3381