

## Ag secretary testifies before tax commission

HARRISBURG — Deputy Secretary of Agriculture J. Luther Snyder testified last Wednesday before the Governor's Tax Commission in Erie on the impact of the state tax system on farmers.

Governor Thornburgh has directed the Pennsylvania Tax Commission to seek reforms that "no Pennsylvanian pays more than his or her fair share of our tax burden in the years ahead."

During the testimony Snyder noted, "that in the

past decade 10,000 farms and one million acres went out of agriculture. Farmers are being squeezed out because of certain burdensome local and state taxing policies."

Snyder urged, "the continuation of several tax relief benefits the Legislature authorized in recognizing the regressive impacts (certain taxes) had on our farmers."

He urged the continuation of the "Clean and Green Act," sales tax exemptions to farmers in the purchase of items used in the production and marketing of farm

products and relief from payment of assessments of municipal improvements such as the installation of water and sewer lines.

Snyder asked for the adoption of amendments to the Clean and Green Act, inheritance tax, and exemptions from current law of family farm corporations from the capital stock franchise tax.

Amendment of the Clean and Green Act would liberalize the split-off provisions allowing farm-land to change hands

between farmers without paying prohibitive add-back taxes, provided the land remains in agriculture.

The inheritance tax would be amended so family farm property is valued at its farm value rather than at its market value, providing the land remains in farming for at least seven years. This amendment would be consistent with recent legislation on the federal level.

Family farm corporations are presently required to pay the capitol franchise tax, an exemption from this prohibitive tax would allow the farm family to pass on farm ownership to sons and daughters without excessive taxation.

He suggested additional revenues be made available to local municipalities on lands acquired by state and federal governments and "while the property tax is an important government source, it is also one of the most maligned."

## Select corn hybrids for disease resistance

NEWARK, Del. — Corn diseases next year can be managed by carefully selecting your varieties now, says University of Delaware extension plant pathologist Bob Mulrooney.

Don't overlook this important aspect of crop management. It can put money in your pocket.

Most corn hybrids now available are resistant to one or more diseases. Ask your seedsman for results of local tests and talk with farmers who have grown the variety you're interested in, advises Mulrooney.

Corn hybrid evaluations are run yearly in Newark and Georgetown by the Delaware Extension Service. Test results are now available at county extension offices in Newark, Dover and Georgetown.

Variety selection is just one aspect of managing diseases, notes the pathologist. Care should be taken to rotate your crops, too. Disease organisms — especially fungi — overwinter in or on crop debris. Given the proper environmental conditions, these can result in yield losses when corn is planted year after year in the same field.

If for some reason you are planting corn continuously, manage crop residues carefully to minimize possible disease problems later on.

Trash left on the surface of

the ground from either no-till or minimum tillage (such as chisel plowing with a single disking), can be a source of fungus spores to infect next year's corn plants.

This residue should be moldboard plowed from

time to time, if you're not practicing rotation.

Remember, to ensure yields, minimize your disease problems by good variety selection, rotation, and residue management, Mulrooney says.



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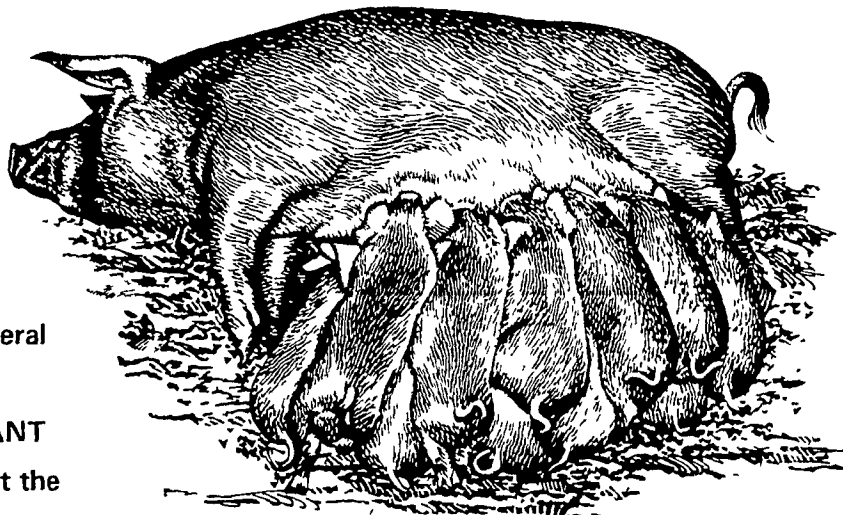
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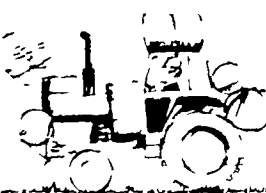
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