

Delaware farmers

(Continued from Page E17) area", and the land which could accommodate growth, the "transfer zone."

Farmers whose land lies within the designated agricultural area are given a number of certificates according to the development potential of their land.

If they choose not to develop their land themselves, they can sell their certificates on the open market to anyone who wishes to build at a higher than five-acre density in the transfer zone.

Since smaller building lots are more profitable to developers, many developers would be very willing to seek out a farmer with development rights

certificates for sale. The certificates entitle the purchaser to put in extra houses on a building lot in the transfer zone.

The certificate price may be anything the farmer and developer agree upon.

Thus the farmer is compensated for unused development rights; growth takes place in an orderly fashion; and a viable farm economy is preserved for the public good.

In this approach the developer, rather than the taxpayer, pays for the unused development rights on farmland.

Both "purchase of development rights" and "transfer of development rights" are suitable measures for farm areas

that are under intense pressure to develop.

In areas that are further from cities, more solidly agricultural, and less immediately attractive to developers, forming "agricultural districts" may be the most appropriate step to preserve farmland for the generations to come.

Such districts exist in Michigan, Wisconsin, Virginia, and New York, for example.

Landowners within an agricultural district have the option of signing an agreement with their county to keep their land in farming for a certain number of years. The contract is renewable.

Landowners who sign into

the district receive certain compensations. Their land is taxed according to its agricultural value rather than its development value.

The farmer is protected against nuisance complaints from neighbors about noises and smells associated with normal agricultural activities. The farmer is protected against the right of eminent domain, except in those rare instances where no alternatives exist. The farmer is assured that no water or sewers will be put in within the district, utilities that would encourage development.

On the largest areas of farmland, agricultural districts ease the burdens of farming and reduce the

uncertainties of government land use policy.

A land use policy takes many years to formulate and put into practice.

With Delaware facing a critical loss of farmland within 20 years—and New Castle and Kent counties within 10 years—it's time to consider a farmland preservation plan, says Vaughn.

We must decide which land, if any, we wish to preserve, and what steps we're willing to take to insure its preservation.

Vaughn discusses Delaware's farmland situation in a new report entitled "Land Use for the Public Good: Should Delaware Farmland Be

Preserved?", published by the Delaware Cooperative Extension Service.

The report addresses such issues as: the state, national and international perspective on the need to preserve farmland; the extent of farmland loss in Delaware; the role agriculture plays in the state's economy; land prices and real estate taxes in Delaware; and who will provide leadership in preserving agricultural land?

Free copies of the 21-page report are available from county extension offices. In New Castle County call 302/738-2506; in Kent County call 302/678-4675; in Sussex County call 302/856-5258.

N.Y. potato grower convicted of illegal shipments

BRIDGEHAMPTON, N.Y. — Potato grower Thomas O. Conklin of Bridgehampton, N.Y., has been convicted in U.S. District Court of shipping potatoes from fields infested with the golden nematode, in violation of a federal statute and U.S. Department of Agriculture quarantine regulations.

Conklin pled guilty and was convicted for three illegal shipments. He moved

nearly 100,000 pounds of potatoes to three different states—Maryland, North Carolina and the District of Columbia.

He was fined the maximum for each violation totaling \$1500.

The golden nematode is a tiny, destructive eelworm that can reduce potato yields if not controlled. It spreads easily in soil that may cling to potatoes, machinery,

nursery stock and other items.

Regulations of the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service require that potatoes grown on infested fields be moved only under conditions that minimize the chance of spread.

In the United States, the nematode is found only on Long Island and in a small area of upstate New York.

N.J. livestock dealer's suspension terminated


LAFAYETTE, N.J. — Harry Vealey, Jr., of Lafayette, N.J., has been reinstated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a livestock dealer and market agency under the Packers and Stockyards Act.

Vealey does business in New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania and Connecticut. He had been suspended for deceptive livestock buying practices and for operating without a bond.

The suspension was for 20

days beginning January 8, and thereafter until he obtained a proper bond. He has now obtained a proper bond and the suspension has been terminated.

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



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