

# Senate expects to see security bill this week

**BY DICK WANNER**  
**HARRISBURG** — A milk security fund bill will probably be introduced into the Pennsylvania Senate early next week.

The bill's prime sponsor, Frank J. O'Connell, was busy this week trying to round up co-sponsors for the measure, which has seen more varieties than Mendel's pea patch.

The bill to be introduced calls for a security fund paid entirely by dealers through a one-cent per hundredweight payment. Instead of contributing to the fund, dealers could also post a bond or a letter of credit in an amount sufficient to pay for 75 percent of the value of their milk shipments in a 45-day period.

All private milk dealers buying milk in Pennsylvania would have to pay into the fund, unless they could post

a bond or get a letter of credit. To clear up the question of who owns the milk between the time it's picked up from a farmer's bulk tank until it gets to the dairy — an especially thorny issue when the raw produce crosses a state line — the bill stipulates that the dairy will get title to the milk as soon as it leaves the farmer's bulk tank.

**Pair of preservation bills**

The Pennsylvania House this week passed a right to farm bill, a measure that would protect farmers from unwarranted nuisance suits filed by both individuals and municipalities.

While the bill aims to protect ordinary farming practices in existence for a year or more before the filing of any nuisance suit, it would not exempt farmers from environmental or clean streams regulations.

From the House, the bill goes to the Senate Ag committee, already considering the ag district bill reported on at length in last week's issue.

While the bills contain some redundant features — the ag district measure, for example, does for districts what the right to farm bill would do for isolated farms wherever they are — there is some feeling that both might be useful. The aim in both measures is to encourage farmland preservation, and the more guns for the battle the better, the reasoning goes.

**Scenic Rivers Amendments**

In an hour-long conference called the other week, 10 members of the state's Scenic Rivers Task Force hammered out three suggested amendments to the Scenic Rivers Act. State Grange staffers Charles

Wismer and David Weinstein were on the horn with three DER representatives, and one person each from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, the American Canoe Association, Trout Unlimited, the state Department of Community Affairs, and Fred Wertz, from the state Department of Agriculture.

First and foremost of the proposed amendments was one that would do away with the section of the act that deals with eminent domain. The conference consensus was that eminent domain was not an integral part of the program, not needed in the act, and should therefore be deleted.

Another amendment would remove the requirement to notify landowners by certified mail when their lands are under

consideration for inclusion in a scenic rivers system. First class mail was judged sufficient.

While seemingly a small point, it should be noted that certified letters look, quite literally, as if they're wrapped in red tape, they have to be signed for and they usually hold unpleasant tidings from a government agency or an individual bent on removing some part of the recipient's property, money or self-esteem.

The other amendment would provide for an additional category of scenic river to the four already mentioned in the act. To 'wild', 'scenic', 'recreational', and 'modified recreational' would be added a 'pastoral' category to accommodate the unique requirements of streams

flowing through mostly agricultural land. This last categorization came about largely as a result of the debate over French Creek in Chester County.

There is so far one scenic river in the state, a 90-mile stretch of the Schuylkill. Two others are close to approval.

The House in September approved Stony Creek by a vote of 149-to-0, and the Senate more recently approved a portion of the Lehigh by a vote of 49-to-0. Both are non-controversial streams, with the Stony Creek banks owned entirely either by the Pennsylvania Game Commission or PP&L, and the Lehigh land owned almost entirely by DER as part of its Lehigh River Gorge Park project.

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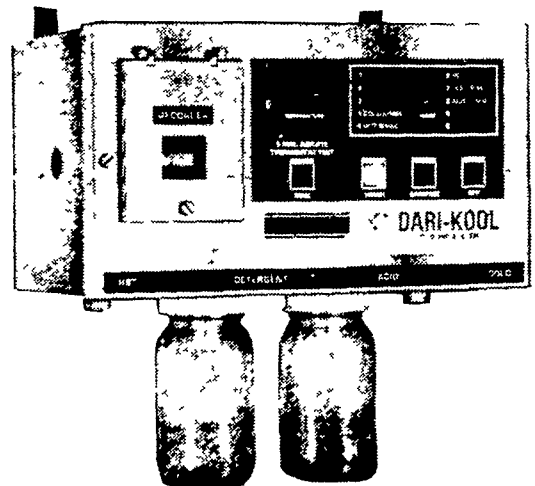
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