

Agri-women

(Continued from Page A1)

copies of testimony to be given which include the speaker's name, date, and the group he represents should be prepared. If a press table is set up, the copies should be placed there. If none exists, they should be handed or mailed to the media.

White added however, that in local situations where township meetings are attended by a large number of people or the issues are hotly debated, oral testimony can sometimes be more persuasive.

According to White, the farm press is usually the most reliable source of information. What he indicated is needed, is for more of that kind of information to get into daily papers.

Because the media thrive on controversy, demonstrations and grievances become more newsworthy than the everything is fine position that the farmers stress. Therefore, it is necessary to get the farmer's story to the public by whatever means are available.

One of the means often overlooked stated White, is the letter to the editor.

"The sincerity of opposing groups is not a question. Their credibility is," stated White.

"I've never known a farmer who used one drop more of any product than he felt absolutely necessary to get the job done. These groups claim that pesticide use could be cut in half." Also speaking to the group, was Dick Leslie, of Paluszek and Leslie Public Relations firm, Washington, D.C.

Leslie gave the group good news and bad news. The good news he said, is that the public is becoming increasingly aware of the problems the farmer faces.

The city dweller is more aware than ever that the farmer can often not be blamed for the rising cost of their food.

The bad news, according to Leslie, is that while farmers are committed to their goals, they lack the knowledge of what to do to increase the public awareness.

"The public must be made more aware of the benefit-risk ratio. They must realize that everything in life is a trade-off," he stated.

"Public relations is not

magic, just hard work," he emphasized.

Leslie suggested that the women get to know their politicians and news media personnel before they need them. "Let them know who you are and what information you can supply them. Become one of their resources," he suggested.

He suggested three tools for better public image. First, he urged members to become members of the Council on Agricultural Science and Technology Membership in CAST he indicated, can put the reports he needs to combat public fallacies at the farmer's disposal.

Leslie advocated the formation of 'truth squads' of farmers and their families to present themselves before the public as survivors of the chemicals they use in their farming operations.

And lastly, he suggested that in most cases, even critics within the media want to hear from someone else's point of view. In most cases, he said, it pays to establish an on-going relationship with both the media and the politicians.

Leslie reminded the group that farmers must listen to the public. Attempts should be made to understand the other person's viewpoint.

He stated that in some cases this may mean that a farmer who has been lax with his safety precautions must clean up his act.



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District acts on flooding and preservation

LANCASTER — At their regular monthly board meeting, the Lancaster County Conservation District heard from two townships in the county—Ephrata presented its farmland preservation assistance request, and Sadsbury asked for help to control their flooding problem.

The District formally accepted the application for assistance from Ephrata Township "to assist the supervisors in their efforts to preserve prime farmland in the township".

The directors volunteered the help of their staff and agreed to continue to encourage the County Commissioners to appoint a Farmland Preservation Board.

The District board added it would continue to push for the adoption of a "suitable resolution to initiate a Farmland Preservation Program for Lancaster County permissible under existing legislation".

The county conservation

leaders moved to urge the commissioners to make a moderate level of funding" available to carry out the program. As the program gets underway, they added, they would be encouraging other townships to submit requests for assistance to the District.

A current request was presented to the board of directors by Nick Yoder, a supervisor from Sadsbury Township. The request to the District was for assistance in controlling the flooding situation on Williams Run.

According to Yoder, the township experiences flooded roads during heavy rains, with a siltation problem in their roadside ditches, from the runoff.

The township engineer, Dan Lake, estimated the cost of controlling the flooding at \$230,000. The project would involve constructing four small storm water retention basins in the watershed. The watershed consists of 1.8 square miles.

Funding has been applied for by the township through

Community Development. According to the supervisor, they stand a 50-50 chance of getting the needed \$50,000 for one of the basins.

Tom Johnston, the District administrator, stated there will be a public meeting held in the near future for land-owners in the township.

The Conservation District agreed to coordinate accelerated conservation planning and application to help to control the storm water and siltation problem on individual properties. -SM



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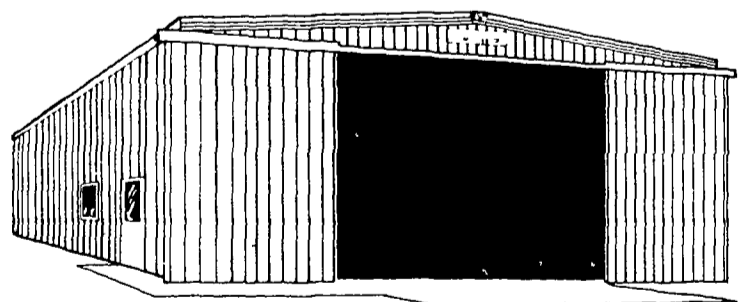
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