

Legislative roundup

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state mental institutions. The move was a step by Mrs. O'Bannon to get her department out of the farming business.

But Thomas and Secretary of Agriculture Penrose Hallowell are anxious to see the farms transferred to Hallowell's department. A lands management bill now firmly lodged in the House Appropriations Committee would make that transfer by legislative mandate. The transfer could also be accomplished with a decree from the Governor.

While nothing seems clear at the moment, Thomas did say he still hopes to get the move made before the livestock is sold from the farms, and before the employees are furloughed. The farm managers are scheduled to meet next week with Department of

Agriculture officials. The meeting was called not so much to decide a course of action, as to give Agriculture some insight into how the farms are being managed now.

Senate passes alien bill

On Tuesday, the Senate unanimously passed HB 1778, a measure that would prevent the buying of more than 100 acres of Pennsylvania farmland by any one foreign individual or corporation. The bill, previously passed by the House, was sent to Governor Thornburgh for his approval.

While there is no apparent Pennsylvania land grab underway by foreign buyers, the bill's sponsors felt a need for some protection just in case. Some two dozen other states have already enacted similar legislation.

Nominations still unconfirmed

What the Senate didn't do last week was vote yea or nay on a number of gubernatorial appointees, among them George Brumbach, the man the administration wants to head up the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board.

Brumbach's name, along with dozens of others, is on the Senate calendar for next week, but no assurances of any confirmations are forthcoming.

Milk security hits Senate floor

The milk security fund bill, a measure that has been hashed and rehashed on the Hill for months, came out of the Senate Ag Committee on Tuesday, and is on the calendar for a first reading next week.

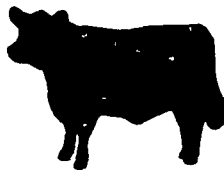
Capital stock bill

It looked for a while like the House may have gotten around to the capital stock franchise tax bill last week,

but other business pushed the measure to a back burner.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Noah Wenger, would exempt family farm corporations from the capital stock franchise tax, which exacts one-percent of the value of that stock annually from its holders.

Wenger points out the obvious hardship this can impose on our small family farm corporations and is convinced that the existence of the tax is a hindrance to the formation of farm corporations. He's hoping the bill will come up for final passage in the House this coming week.



Maryland looks hard at RCA

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Lt. Gov. Samuel Bogley urged about 25 representatives of government agencies, civic and environmental groups last week to take a hard look at U.S. Department of Agriculture proposals to revamp its resource conservation programs.

Bogley made his comments about new program proposals for dealing with resource problems of national concern at a public meeting in Annapolis. The proposals are the result of a comprehensive survey of the nation's soil, water and related resources conducted under the 1977 Resources Conservation Act.

Noting that USDA conservation programs have tradi-

tionally been administered through soil conservation districts and local stabilization committees to meet local priorities and concerns, Bogley said "The key to this whole process is the question of who should determine what resources are worth saving. A national committee sitting in Washington, D.C., or the people who live and work on the land?"

"If USDA is going to redirect funds to the most severe problems, Maryland will undoubtedly rank low. We have great strides in conserving and protecting Maryland's resources, but conservation is a constant-care proposition. Help in maintaining agricultural productivity and environmental quality is as important in Maryland as anywhere else in the nation," Bogley said.

Vernon Foster, farmer and chairman of the State Soil Conservation Committee, echoed Bogley. "We have done a good job in Maryland in resource conservation. According to the RCA survey, it looks like they want to put emphasis where there's the most need—where they haven't done the job."

"We don't have enough technical people to do what we need to do now," Foster continued. "If the RCA survey says we need more help in other parts of the country, it looks like Marylanders will be getting even less money for conservation programs."

Willma Reeves, citizen member of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation State Committee, said that USDA's proposals seemed to ignore the rights of landowners.

According to Gerald R. Calhoun, state conservationist for USDA's Soil Conservation Service, RCA data and proposals can be reviewed at local SCS and soil conservation district offices. Signed written comments may be sent to: RCA Response Analysis Center, P.O. Box 888, Athens, Ga. 30603. The deadline is March 28.

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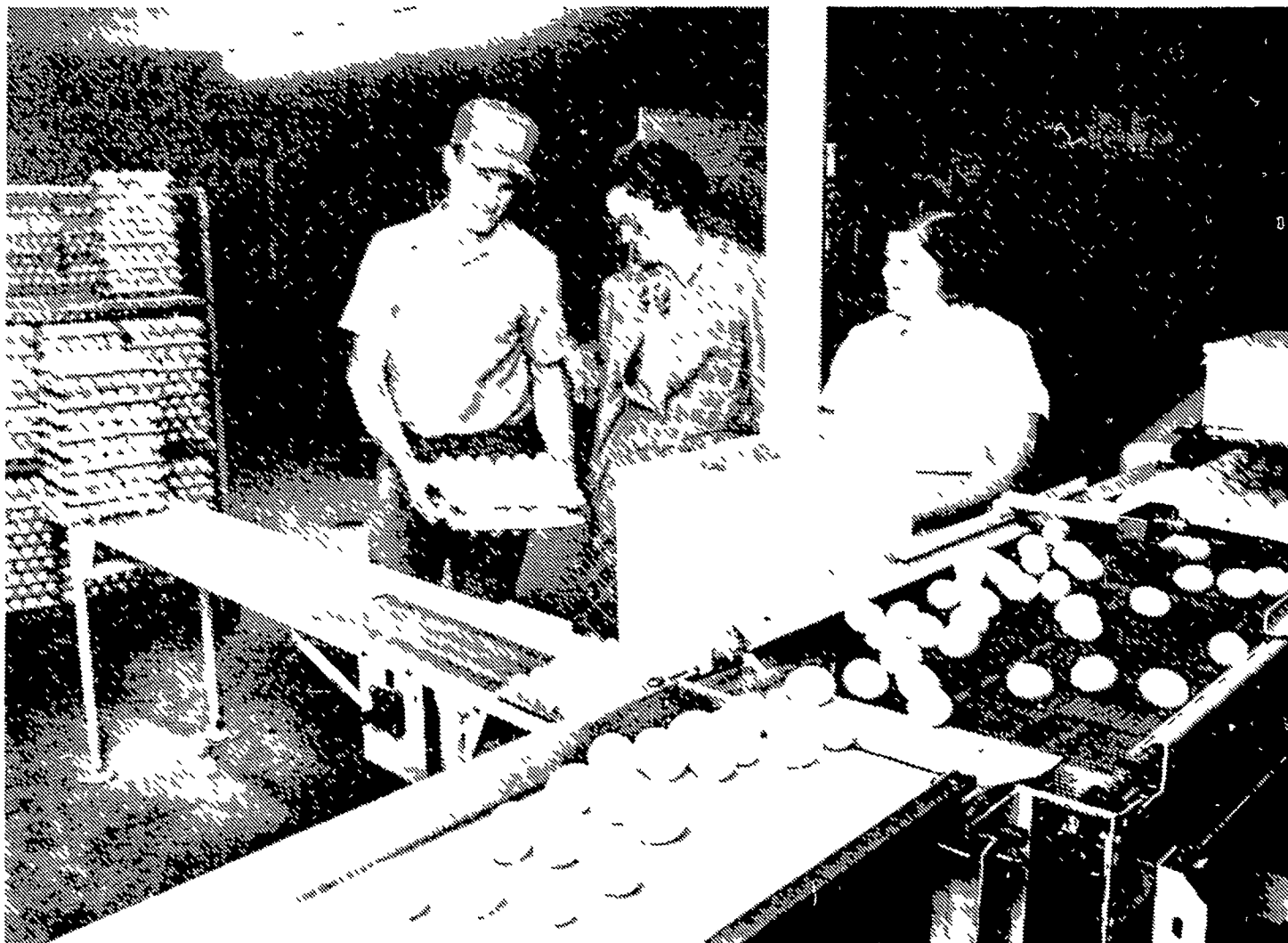
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Edith Schroeder (center), Manager Hellam Office, observing Robert L. & Ruth M. Lehman, Wrightsville R D #3, processing the eggs from their 60,000 bird layer operation.



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