

Four agencies join forces to catch others' violations

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Four Federal agencies concerned with public safety health have announced a new inspection referral program to better coordinate investigations.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Food Safety and Quality Service — members of the Interagency Regulatory Liaison Group — are starting the program next month to effect quicker identification and removal of serious public health hazards.

In the past, whenever one inspector observed a situation which seemed in violation of another agency's rules, the information was passed along to the appropriate agencies for follow-up.

In recent years, the agencies' regional offices independently developed checklists, forms, procedural guidelines and other aids to facilitate such reporting

The new referral program establishes a formal, standardized procedure for reporting observations of suspected violations to the agency responsible. Most

major industries are visited by inspectors from one or more of the IRLG agencies. Examples of businesses that would be affected by the cooperative inspection program include food processing, chemical manufacturing, drug production, and the manufacturing of various consumer goods.

Inspectors from each of the agencies involved will be trained to recognize possible violations of another agency's regulations, however, a determination that a violation exists will be made only by the agency having the legal jurisdiction over the suspected violation, and then only on the basis of the responsible agency's own follow-up investigation.

Inspectors will not be permitted to enter any area of a facility or do anything not ordinarily done in the course of an inspection authorized by statute for their agency. Inspectors will report to the appropriate agency only those possible infractions which are in plain view during the course of their regular inspection

Examples of what might be referred are pesticide misuse; foam, scum, or dead aquatic life near a waste discharge; open burning of trash piles, oil or chemical

spills; or mislabeling of drugs or toxic substances

The fifth IRLG member, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, will continue to cooperate with the other agencies on an informal basis for such referrals, but is not joining the initial stages of the more formal program announced March 31st pending clarification of various legal points.

In addition, because of the complexity and scope of its field structure, the Food Safety & Quality Service does not anticipate full implementation of the program until September 1, 1980.

Although public comment need not be solicited about the new inspection referral program, in the interest of open administration of regulatory authorities, the IRLG agencies are encouraging interested persons to submit written comments within 75 days of the new program's publication in the Federal Register March 28

Written comments (preferably with five copies) should be addressed to: Ms Susan Guennette, Executive Assistant, IRLG, Room 303, Washington, D C 20207; phone (202) 643-4350

Clean and green a little greener

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania's clean and green act which provides special tax incentives for farmers and forestland owners became a little greener when Governor Dick Thornburgh signed House Bill 725.

"Farmers and forestland owners who are participating in the preferential tax assessment program can now transfer their land, or portions of it, without being subject to roll back taxes," says Peter H. B. Norton, extension resource development specialist at Penn State.

"This clarifies the 'roll back tax' issue when farmland or forestland is transferred without resulting in a change in use," Norton adds.

Landowners participating in tax assessment under Act 319 have their land taxed on the basis of its "use value" rather than "market value." When this land or portions of it were sold or otherwise transferred to new ownership, the land was then subject to a "roll back tax" of up to seven years plus six

percent per year simple interest.

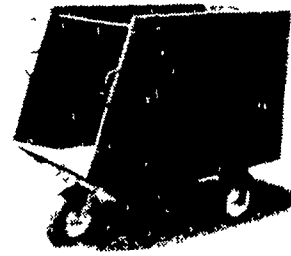
The roll back tax is the difference between the "use value tax" and what the tax would have been had the land been taxed on the basis of its "market value."

This amendment will remove the possibility of a

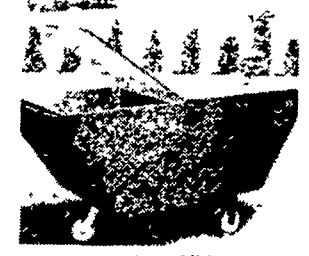
"roll back tax" being assessed to farmland or forestland that continues in either of these uses after its ownership has changed.

The original language in Act 319 was subject to varied interpretation and resulted in difference in administration.

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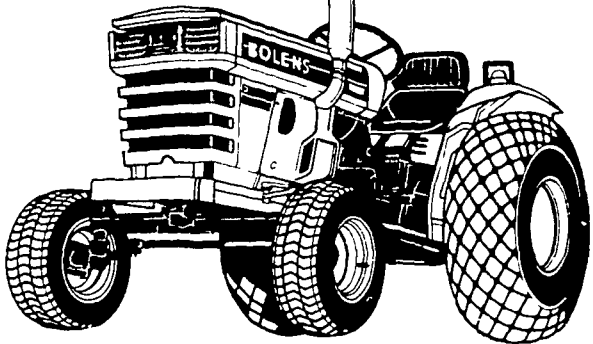
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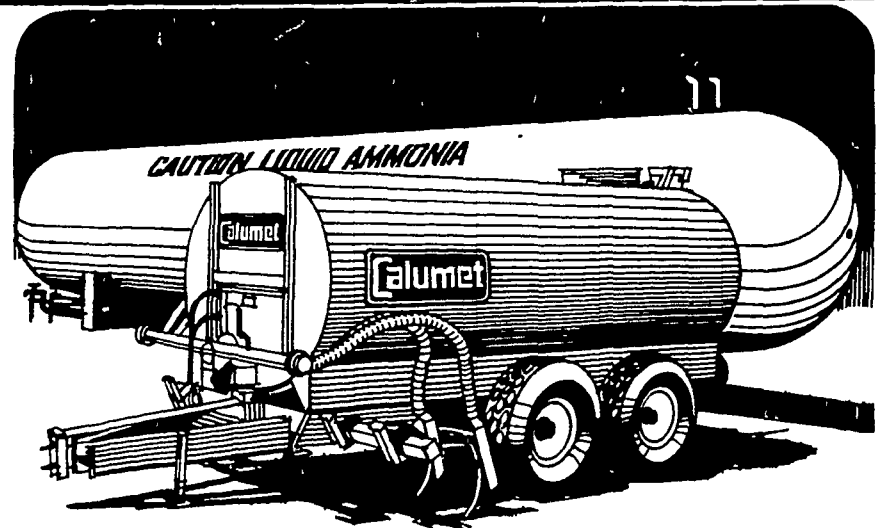
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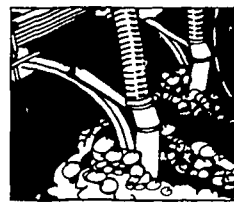


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