

Farmers told TMI cleanup will affect agriculture

BY CURT HARLER
MIDDLETOWN—A small but vocal group of farmers met Monday night with government officials to discuss the cleanup of Three Mile Island and how it will affect agriculture. It soon became obvious the government people intended to discuss only cleanup procedures while the farmers were interested in answers to a wider range of questions.

The lineup from the government agencies was impressive. John Collins, currently the Nuclear Regulatory Agency's senior man at TMI; William Kirk, the Environmental Protection Agency's TMI Site Monitor; and Thomas Jaworski, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources all were on hand at the meeting organized by the state Grange.

"Potential economic impacts include possible resistance to consumption of agricultural and fishery products that the public may think are radioactively contaminated," NRC's Collins told the group.

Property values in the TMI area may drop, he said. While he maintained any fears of contamination were unfounded, he conceded they could cut into farm product

sales, especially sales of milk. "I don't see any real affect on agricultural land," he said. None of the agencies had any dollar figures on

potential losses or projections of how long the area's farms would be in a poor light. The only recourse farmers would have, DER's Jaworski suggested, was to sue

General Public Utilities for damages. Legal action would have to prove the TMI accident caused financial damage to growers. The agency people (Turn to Page B3)



Three government specialists pondered farmers' questions at Monday night's meeting on the importance of Three Mile Island on farming. From left are Environmental Protection Agency's Site Monitor William Kirk; John Collins, the Nuclear Regulatory Agency's senior man at TMI; and Thomas Jaworski, with Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Resources.

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