

Del. farm preservation

Continued from Page C36) to pay penalties and rollback taxes if they take land out of agriculture. Sometimes government

actions contribute to the loss of farmland. For example, governmental bodies are not likely to think about the possible effect on farmland when they approve construction of on-site sewage disposal facilities, sewer collection and transmission systems, solid waste disposal, roads, schools, hospitals, etc.

Rural areas are often favored for new public facilities and highways because it is easier and cheaper to build there than in or near cities. But when these improvements go in, more development of farmland usually follows.

Federal, state and local housing and mortgage financing programs also often foster rural development. Up until now such programs have included no formal review or consideration of impact on agriculture.

The Governor's Advisory Committee says that public agencies ought to be

required by law to consider the impact on agriculture of public facility design and location decisions, and should attempt to limit direct access from adjacent properties to regional transportation and utility systems.

Some farmland loss is the result of rezoning and subdivision approvals even without actual development. The rezoning of agricultural land for other uses and the recording of preliminary subdivision plans tend to inflate the price of land beyond its agricultural value.

No tax penalties are associated with the rezoning or recording of preliminary subdivision plans. This encourages nonfarm ownership of farmland for speculative purposes. The committee believes that if land is rezoned for nonagricultural use, it should be reassessed immediately.

The new revenue would

also help replace taxes lost due to the farmland preservation tax credits. Furthermore, unless the property is used for its approved purpose within a set period of time, the land should automatically revert back to its original agricultural zoning, and any subdivision approvals should be voided.

Some of the conflicts between farmers and non-farmers over complaints about farm operations and unplanned extensions of utilities, services and transportation facilities are due to the proliferation of small, generally unregulated road-front subdivisions. The committee recommends that county ordinances should subject all such proposed subdivisions to review regarding their impact on agriculture.

Public hearings on the committee's recommendations are scheduled for November. The times

and locations are as follows: Monday, November 10, 7 p.m., Capital Grange, South Governors Avenue, Dover; Thursday, November 13, 7 p.m., Delaware Technical and Community College, Southern Campus, Rooms 344 A and B, Georgetown; and Monday, November 17, 7 p.m., Gunning Bedford Junior High School Auditorium, Cox Neck Road (County Road 411 near Delaware City).

The Committee will present final recommendations to the Governor by the end of the year.



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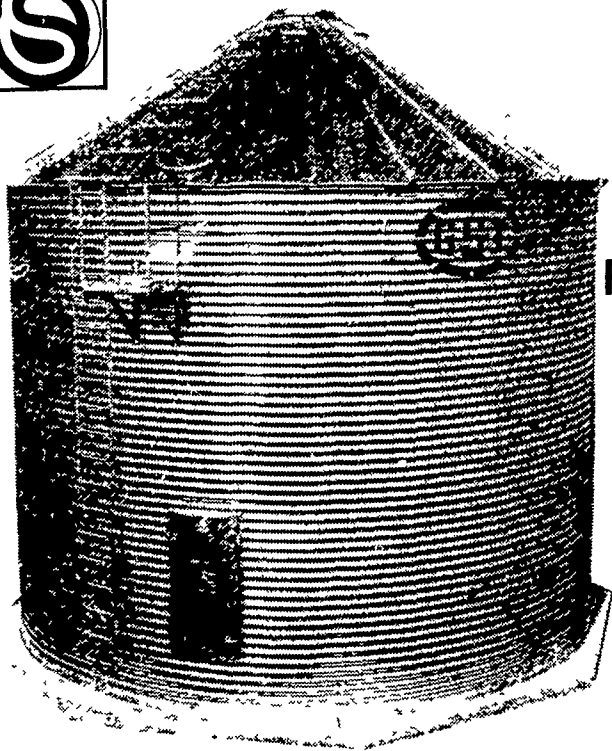
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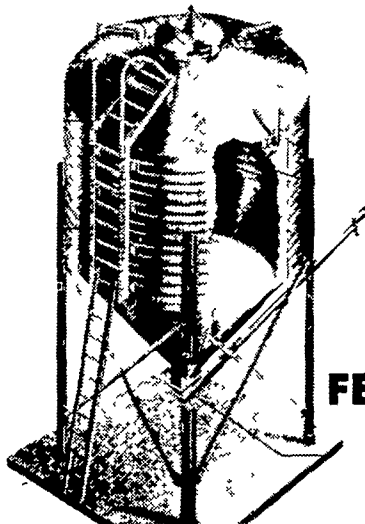
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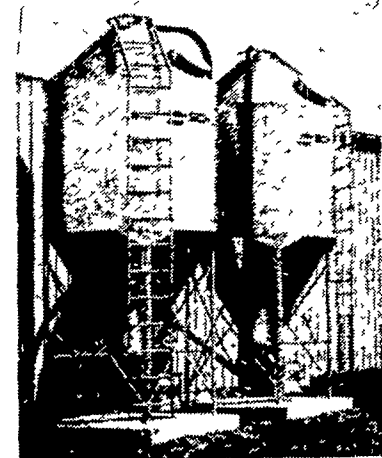


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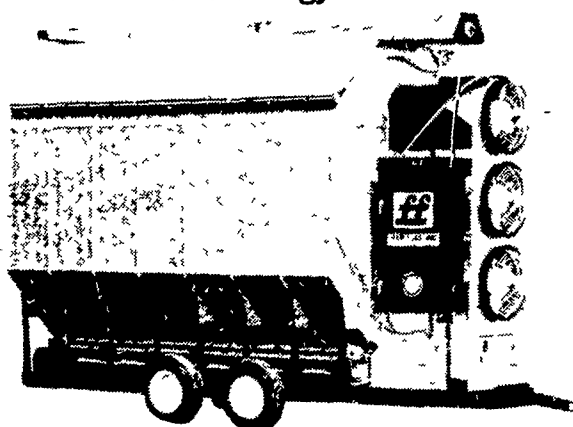


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