State survey shows Lancaster most

concerned over farm preservation

MECHANICSBURG -

Lancaster County residents have been found to be the most concerned about the need to preserve farmland in the southeastern portion of Pennsylvania and in the entire state, commented Richard Fox, Penn State Extension specialist, in the results of a statewide survey on citizen's viewpoints.

The Penn State survey. which was conducted from January to March this year, sampled the opinions of over 14,000 Pennsylvanians from each county according to age and sex apportionment.

Of the 32 people surveyed in the City of Lancaster, 84 percent felt there was a need for a farmland preservation

This need was felt even more strongly in boroughs throughout Lancaster County. There, 88 percent of

front wheels for stability ball bearing

casters for easy positioning

the 68 people surveyed felt there was a need to protect the farmland.

At a somewhat lower level, but still greater than the Lancaster City residents, the 191 Lancaster Countians residing in townships showed an 86 percent approval for a preservation program.

On the county level, the 86 percent who responded to the need for farmland preservation in Lancaster County ranked it as the highest priority item in the entire survey. It was considered to be more important than fire protection which was only considered to be a vital program by 33 percent of the residents surveyed, and only 17 percent gave garbage collection a priority rating (this priority higher in the City of Lancaster than in either the

boroughs or townships.)

Concerning the preservation of farmland on the statewide level, 73 percent of the people surveyed felt it was a priority program. And in the seven-county Capital Region, 81 percent gave it a priority rating - better, but still somewhat lower than Lancaster's 86 percent.

Going hand in hand with the Lancaster Countian's desire to keep their farms as farmland was their interest in protecting and conserving the natural environment and open spaces. On the county level, 73 percent of the respondents felt a program for the environment was a priority, while 67 percent were in favor of keeping the open spaces.

The survey also brought to light the fact that Lancaster countians, like other Pennsylvanians, were in favor of

centralizing development areas and remodeling existing development areas. Only 3 percent of those Lancaster County residents surveyed wanted new residential developments outside existing built-up area. Over 60 percent said they would prefer businesses to remain in existing shopping areas and existing built-up areas to be remodeled or further developed.

Surfacing from the survey results was the realization that few Lancaster County residents were aware of the benefits of using sewage sludge on forestland or cropland. Only 25 percent of the Lancaster City respondents were in favor of sludge application, while 31 percent said "no" to application and 43 percent had no opinion.

The "yes" votes and "no" votes were just about even in both the boroughs and townships, with the "yes'es" holding on to a slim margin. In boroughs and townships, respectively, 39 percent and 42 percent were in favor of sludge application, and 32 percent and 36 percent said "no"

According to the survey results, it appears more needs to be done in the way of education and information on land application and recycling of sewage sludge not only in Lancaster County but throughout Pennsylvanıa.

This type of information, along with various other areas of public opinion from whether citizens are given enough attention by government to whether their drinking water is safe - is available to each county

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through the Penn State survey.

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According to Richard Fox, the survey information can be used as a tool to local municipalities in planning their annual and long-range programs.

"If monetary resources are scarce, you want to be sure you're putting your money in the right places. The survey points out areas where you should be channeling your energies.

"The survey can provide the necessary support data and can document various needs for the local unit of government when applying for grants or funds for projects.

The survey doesn't give (1) all the answers; it's just pointing the direction," Fox commented.

He emphasized the need (Turn to Page A35)



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