

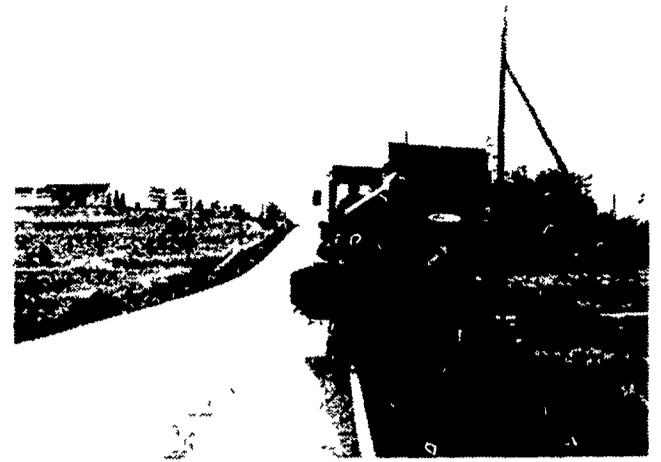
Examples of poor use of SMV emblems



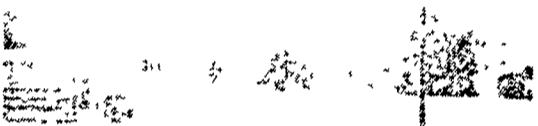
Homeowner along Rt. 340 in Lancaster County could have saved some money by using standard driveway markers rather than a more expensive SMV sign. Numerous landowners along Rt. 340 display SMV signs improperly.



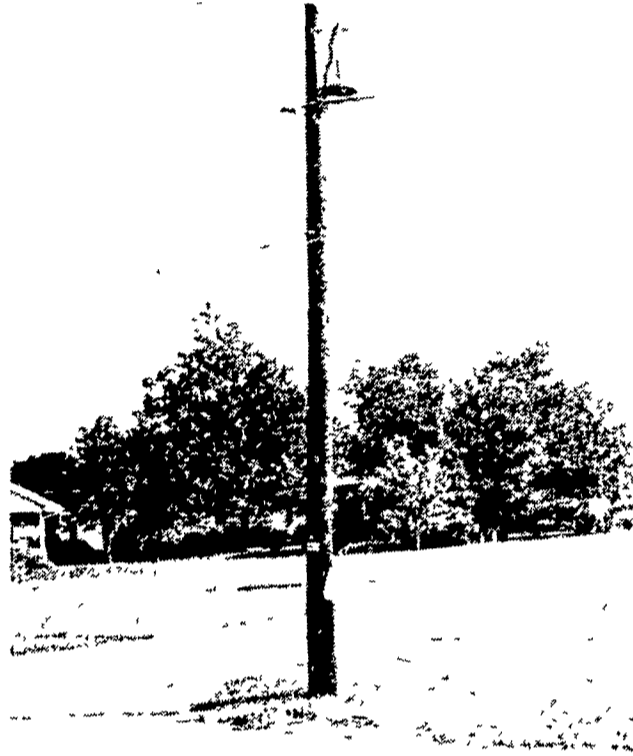
This Dauphin County farm along Rt. 39 uses a SMV sign as a driveway marker rather than to mark slow moving machinery. See editorial, page A-10.



Here's how SMV emblems are meant to be shown: centered on the rear of slow moving vehicles. Danger of confusion between slow moving farm equipment and improperly used SMV signs is especially acute at night when it's difficult to see what the SMV sign is attached to.



State law does not provide that SMV signs be used as gate or fence markers, as at this Neffsville parking lot.



Telephone poles are quite slow moving. But use of SMV signs on poles detracts from quick recognition of the sign on the rear of farm equipment.



Down on the ground, but not out of the picture, this Lebanon County SMV sign is used to close off a farm supply dealer's parking lot.

How to beat corn borer

NEWARK, Del. — In recent years, farmers have been planting corn early in the season to maximize yields. But corn planted before dogwood bloom is particularly attractive to the European corn borer.

Many growers try to avoid problems by treating for corn borers at planting, points out Delaware extension pest management specialist Mark Graustein. Using insecticides helps, he says, but researchers at the Delaware agricultural Experiment Station are looking for less-costly, more energy-efficient methods of European corn borer control.

Many of our present methods of controlling overwintering corn borers are based on research conducted in the Mid-West during the late 1920's, when the pest was just getting established here.

Corn varieties have changed dramatically since then, and so have the insects themselves. Corn varieties of the 1920's were much more susceptible to corn borer damage than the varieties in use today.

Furthermore, in the 1920's there was only one generation of corn borers per year. Now on the Delaware Peninsula there are three complete generations and part of a fourth in some years.

Literature based on that early research advocates fall plowing. The idea was to get the stubble underground where it could decompose. But now that energy is such a great concern, the researchers feel it's time to take a second look.

Suppose we were to try leaving the stalks standing for the birds to find and eat the corn borers. Leaving the stalks standing would also help prevent erosion. And if we were to find no difference in corn borer populations between plowed fields and those left to bird predation, we might as well save those extra energy-consuming trips across the field.

To find out whether bird predation is as effective as various combinations of plowing and disking, Delaware extension pest management technician Joanne Whitehead will soon be conducting a controlled experiment for her masters thesis.

Paul Burtutis and Charles Mason of the Experiment Station are collaborating with Graustein on several related studies. They hope to take advantage of the corn borer's liking for early corn by planting some especially early corn as a trap crop.

They want to know whether the borers will concentrate their egg laying in the earlier corn and leave the regular corn crop alone.

And while the borers are concentrated in the trap crop, the researchers will try out another new weapon in their pest control arsenal.

The Trichogramma parasite, discovered in Delaware several years ago by Burtutis, parasitizes the

eggs of the European corn borer. The researchers plan to release large numbers of the parasite into the early corn trap crop. They want to find out whether Trichogramma will make an effective corn borer control, either in combination with, or in place of chemical sprays.

A related study will attempt to determine if the natural population of

Trichogramma can effectively suppress the corn borers in a trap crop or if annual releases are necessary to provide effective control.

Finally, the Experiment Station scientists will continue their basic research into the biological relationship between the corn borer and corn plant. Much information is still needed on corn borer control

thresholds as well as the impact corn borer infestations have on yield in relation to the growth stage of the corn when the initial infestation occurs. Information about natural mortality of the corn borer is also needed. Although this appears to be rather basic research, it is this kind of research that provides new integrated approaches to pest management that save growers money.

Good management boosts hog litter size

NEWARK, Del. — The goal of pork producers is to have sows that farrow a large number of live healthy pigs and wean 9 to 10 of them. One manager of a 500-sow farrowing complex claims a weaning average of 10.2 pigs per litter. Some would say he's lucky.

But according to University of Delaware extension livestock specialist Richard Fowler, good management makes this kind of luck possible.

Many factors influence litter size. Good nutrition, fertile boars, moderate environmental temperatures, and good sanitation all play a part. Proper handling of animals during farrowing and lactation also help boost weaning averages.

Here are some of Fowler's suggestions for boosting the size of litters on your farm.

Deworm sows two weeks

before moving them to farrowing crates or pens. Treat twice for external parasites.

One of the chief ways young pigs get these parasites is by direct contact. Breaking the cycle by treating the sow helps assure the litter a trouble-free start.

The farrowing unit should be clean. Producers with central farrowing houses and a high weaning average emphasize this. The type of cleanliness they talk about is "clean enough to eat off the floor."

All organic matter must be removed including dust. Disinfectants are of no value if there is any organic matter remaining on the surface.

Rinse the area thoroughly if you use coal tar disinfectants or lye.

Wash the sow - especially teats and belly. Remove organic matter that contains possible diarrhea-causing

bacteria and roundworm eggs.

Adjust the feed ration. This is especially important for sows moving from outside gestation lots to a farrowing crate or pen. Oats or bran may replace 25 percent of the grain to create a bulky ration.

Epsom salts at 20 pounds per ton or potassium chloride at 15 pounds per ton will help prevent constipation.

One of the challenges of farrowing house management is to keep both sow and pigs comfortable. She prefers a 65 degree temperature. But her pigs seem most comfortable for the first few days in 90 to 95 degree temperatures.

Overheated sows may milk poorly and eventually dry up. Careful placement of the heat source for the litter can avoid this problem.

Be alert to signs that in-

dicate a sow is about to farrow. Being on hand may make it possible to save more pigs. An attendant can save the pig occasionally born in the afterbirth and suffocated without help. Sows that are overfed are more likely to have farrowing problems than those in good condition, says the specialist.

Don't feed sows for 12 to 24 hours after farrowing. But be sure they have plenty of fresh water. Use three to four pounds of laxative ration as the first feed and increase feed gradually over 10 days until sows are on full feed.

Take temperatures of sows after farrowing. If over 103 degrees F, watch animals closely and put them on an antibiotic treatment for three to five days.