

Farmers lose two bills, look to next year

HARRISBURG — Farmers lost two sought-after measures in the closing days of Pennsylvania's 164th session of the General Assembly.

But already farmers, farm organizations, and the Agriculture Department are looking forward to the 1981 session.

The Senate Agriculture committee failed to act on either HB 1793 or HB 1794 before the lawmakers returned home for the Thanksgiving recess. There will be no further legislative activity on Capitol Hill until the next session convenes.

HB 1793 would have allowed the creation of agriculture districts in the state and allowed purchase of development easements.

HB 1794 would have protected farmers from any nuisance ordinance passed by a local municipality.

'We were late on our timing,' concluded Pennsylvania Farmers' Association Governmental Relations Director Al Myers, speaking for all of the farm groups.

'We will try again,' promised Farmers Union State Director Leonard Zemaitis. While Reno Thomas, a prime backer of the bills will not be back in his post as house ag committee leader, having failed to gain reelection, a number

of other legislators probably will back a second try at making the goals set in the measures.

Several sources said Sen. Franklin Kury wrapped up any chances of the bill's making it out of committee.

But it was not all negative in the closing days of the most recent session.

The House concurred on changes made in the Senate to HB 1176 and the Governor is expected to sign the bill into law.

HB 1176, sponsored by Chester County Representative Joseph Pitts, would allow a farm to be valued at its agricultural value rather than its speculative value for development when figures are computed to determine the state inheritance tax.

The measure is seen as one which may save a good bit of state farmland which otherwise might be sold out of the family, or sold for development, in order to pay inheritance taxes.

Also passed was HB 1252, a small business-oriented measure dealing with corporate net operating taxes, but one which the Governor's office says will aid some farmers who, because of drought, have experienced losses in 1980.

Meanwhile, farmers and farm groups are looking forward to the 1981

legislative session and adopting policy positions. The Agriculture Department is preparing its legislative priority list.

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Chester Heim said farmers should be on the lookout for a rerun of the right-to-farm and ag district bills.

The Grange sees a bill containing provisions to those in the current session's HB 1264 as having the best chance of passage. Some provisions of HB 1793 may be melted into that measure.

All of the new or changed legislation will be assigned a new printer's number for the next session.

Farm credit is the third item on the Administration's priority list, Heim said. The state hopes to propose a program to help farmers who need credit. The bill should be beneficial to beginning farmers.

Details are being worked out.

Also standing in the wings may be some new food law, although at present it still is in the discussion stage. Dog law may come under review.

Farmer groups hope tax

reform also will grab its share of the limelight.

Altogether, agriculture

had a good batting average in the 1980 session of the state legislature. The

groundwork laid now will determine if 1981 will be as successful.—CH



If you believe inflation is gobbling up your dollars, you would have been convinced last Friday while banking at one of Lebanon Valley National's offices. Branch Manager Gene Martin assured us, however, the live turkeys in each office was just a one day promotion for a Thanksgiving dinner giveaway.

Ag engineer to retire

STATE COLLEGE — A. Roger Grout, professor of agricultural engineering extension at Penn State, will retire December 31 with over 32 years of service.

A native of Kennedy, N.Y., Grout managed the home farm for eight years, then enrolled at Cornell University where he received a bachelor of science degree in 1948. He received a master of science degree from Penn State in 1962.

He places major emphasis on improvement of dairy housing facilities, state and regional manure management guidelines, and the Penn State Plan Service.

As extension agricultural engineer, Grout initiated and developed numerous educational programs for dairy and livestock farmers in the state. These include housing, barn ventilation, farm drainage, machinery adjustment, and crop drying.

One of his significant activities has involved the planning and engineering design of dairy barns, milking centers, and livestock management facilities.

During the retiring professor's career, he provided individual assistance to almost 6000 farmers who were remodeling old barns or constructing new facilities. The estimated value of the completed structures exceeds \$40 million.

Grout is responsible for the preparation or acquisition and distribution of hundreds of plans for farm structures and livestock management facilities. Seven of his plans have been used nationwide.

He was a member of an ad hoc group representing farm organizations and state and federal agencies interested in developing a better un-



A. Roger Grout

derstanding of the environmental issues affecting farmers and regulatory agencies.

He served as chairman of the manure management committee of the Northeast Dairy Practices Councils; Penn State representative and chairman of the Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service; and member of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources Manure Management for Environmental Protection Committee.

In 1977 he was recipient of the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association Extension Award for his contributions to the state's dairy industry and in 1978 won the Pennsylvania State Epsilon Sigma Phi Society Ruby Award for excellence in Extension programming.

Grout is a member of Alpha Zeta and Epsilon Sigma Phi societies, American Society of Agricultural Engineers, and the Extension Professors Association.

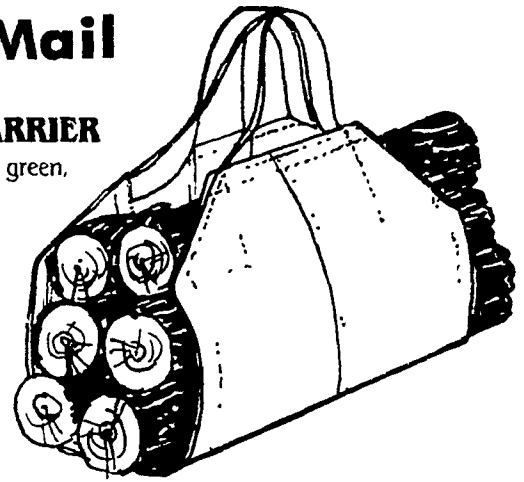
He is married to the former Priscilla DuMond, of Ulster Park, N.Y. They have three children.

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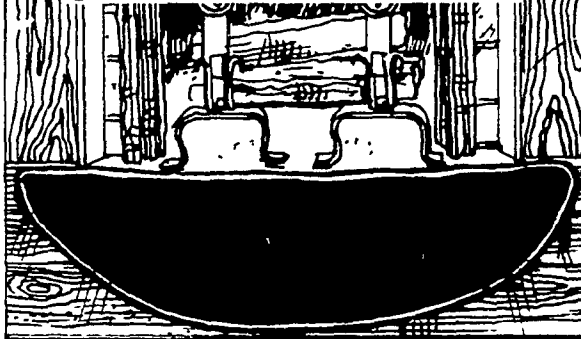
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