

Brecknock farmers reaffirm opposition to zoning changes

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
FIVEPOINTVILLE — Opposition to proposed changes in agricultural zoning regulations was reaffirmed Monday night in a meeting of Brecknock Township farmers in the Fivepointville Fire Hall.

The proposed change receiving the most opposition is a restriction that would require a minimum of 25 acres for poultry operations of more than 5,000 birds, hog operations of more than 25 sows or other livestock operations of 50 head.

After considerable discussion of the 25-acre restriction, including a suggestion to reduce the minimum to 10 acres, many of the 115 attending farmers favored the elimination of acreage requirements from the zoning ordinance entirely.

Elimination of the acreage requirement was just one of a number of concerns expressed by the farmers at the crowded session that lasted for more than two hours in the basement of the fire hall.

Among other items of opposition and concern that the farmers expressed to Harold Shank, township supervisor attending the meeting, were:

A regulation that would require the plowing down of liquid manure within 10 days of application was a concern of a number of farmers. In addition to weather limitations involving such a regulation, there was a considerable difference of opinion concerning the definition of liquid manure under the proposed changes in the zoning ordinance.

It was felt that setback requirements proposed for certain agricultural operations were discriminatory.

Several times farmers questioned why the ordinance should restrict the construction of a hog barn within 500 feet of a dwelling and no similar setback requirement is placed on the construction of a dwelling in the vicinity of a hog barn.

Among other sections of the proposed zoning changes opposed by farmers were an abandonment

clause involving agricultural operations that may be temporarily suspended, restrictions on the future operation, particularly expansion, of farms considered non-conforming uses in other zoning districts and whether general nuisance restrictions might conflict with "Right to Farm" protection in the agricultural district.

Another of the major comments made by the farmers was the need to hold another public hearing to review the proposed zoning changes and any additional revisions that may be made as the result of opposition that has been expressed.

Unofficial chairman of the informal meeting was Robert Schnader, steer farmer from R2 Reinholds.

Supervisor Shank explained that the board, the planning commission and solicitor were scheduled to meet in a private session to discuss any revisions to the zoning changes.

He explained that no action would be taken at the private meeting and formal action on the ordinance would take place at one of the board's regularly scheduled meetings on the first and third Tuesday of the month.

Notification would be for-

thcoming when any action is planned, he said.

In addition to the proposed zoning changes, a number of other topics were touched upon at the meeting.

From the farmers, several questions centered on whether such regulations are needed to be updated. Concerns were also ex-

pressed of the effect of an increasing number of regulations on the future of farming.

From the township, certain agricultural practices were cited, such as damage to roads by the turning of steel-wheeled tractors and the plowing of ground to the edge of roads which causes the washing of topsoil onto the roads.

Computer program

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and sizes and the proportion of income produced by each. Also provided is a summary of expenses and receipts for that field as well as the net income.

The process is repeated for each picking on each field so the grower has a continuing account of how well or how poorly each is performing in relation to others on the same farm. Evaluations are made immediately on yields, pack out, quality, size and price to determine where changes are needed to improve income while there is still time to make adjustments.

After the crop is sold the grower is provided a summary of all the information obtained from the farm during the marketing season. This is sorted by fields and

varieties so the grower has complete and accurate information for evaluation.

In addition, summary information on varieties is compiled from all the growers to use for variety selection for the following year. Growers participating in the program are numbered to provide anonymity in the summary reports.

During 1980, there were 628 acres of tomatoes included in the program.

Further information, including examples of the "Tomato Marketing Analysis Program" print outs as well as variety summary information, is available from the Lackawanna County Cooperative Extension Service, 200 Adams Avenue, Scranton 18503.

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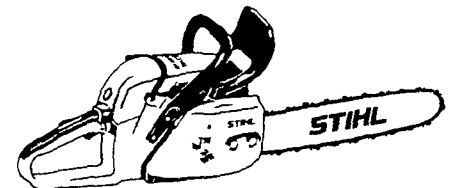
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