

# County seeks \$1.5 million for Conestoga farm projects

LANCASTER — The Lancaster County Coordinating Committee consisting of all local USDA agencies has filed an application to the Conservation and Environmental Protection Division of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service for funds to install conservation measures in the headwaters of the Conestoga River in northeast Lancaster County.

The amount of funds is approximately \$1.5 million which, if approved, will be spent on critical areas to solve the pollution problems of the River that are attributed to agricultural non-point sources.

The funds, appropriated under the Rural Clean Water Program, will provide an incentive to farmers of up to \$50,000 per farm during the next 10 years.

This money will be contracted through the Lancaster County ASC

Committee with the Soil Conservation Service having the technical responsibility in the field in laying out practices and providing the design work and specifications. The County Extension Office and the Soil Conservation District will provide information and education.

The Conestoga Headwaters Rural Clean Water Project will include the following townships: West Cocalico, East Cocalico, Brecknock, Caernarvon and parts of Clay, West Earl, Earl, and East Earl Townships. There are a total of 1250 farms in the project area with 400 farms in the more critical areas.

The criteria for establishing the critical areas are:

- (1) Those farms adjacent to the major streams within the Conestoga Headwaters Assn;
- (2) Those farms adjacent to

small tributaries within the watershed;

(3) Livestock farms having an animal unit density greater than 1.5 animal units per acre; and

(4) Those farms using high rates of commercially supplied nutrients and pesticides on all or most of their land.

If the project is approved and funds are provided for the establishment of practices on these farms, the result should be an improvement in public health, economics, and recreation. Public health benefits would result from control of nitrates in surface and underground waters.

Control of non-point source sewage and animal wastes would reduce bacteriological contamination of ground water and reduce contamination of surface streams.

## Extension Association

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Weaver said even more information will be needed in the future, including more financial management information, and more information on estate planning, energy preservation of agricultural land and drought survival.

Robert Kindig, a dairy farmer and member of the Extension Board Service, also spoke of the need for the Extension to provide unbiased information and a unified team approach. "Extension is an obvious place to look for advice."

Citing the Dairy Herd Improvement Association as an example of a valuable Extension program, Kindig pointed out that the increase in production of cows on official test in Lancaster County amounts to \$16,000,000 annually. This, coupled with the genetic influence of cows through this program, adds up to about \$20,000,000 in benefits to the county each year.

"These results help the farmer as well as the consumer," Kindig noted. "More production and more efficiency helps keep down the rising cost of food." He pointed out that the export of farm products also works to offset the value of imports.

He concluded, "Never minimized the importance of strong agricultural extension programs."

Capital Region Extension Administrator Marion Deppen led a standing applause to recognize County Extension Director M.M. Smith who will retire at the end of March. Deppen noted that Smith has been leading extension

programs for 44 years, a record not matched by any other extension worker in Pennsylvania. He also said that permission has been given to hire another agricultural extension agent, and a search committee is being formed. An appointment of the County Extension Director will be made sometime in mid-March.

Deppen reported on a "Citizen's Viewpoint" survey in which Lancaster County came out as the number one place to live out of the state's 67 counties. Deppen added, "Lancaster County is a special place in America, and with the blessings come responsibilities."

He said that while the Extension program originates at Penn State, "all the action is out here." He cited the Expanded Foods and Nutrition Program as a one to one program which is doing "very effective work" in promoting better health and a better life.

Deppen announced that soon "perishable extension information" will be available through television by way of a black box purchased by the producer and telephone numbers to dial with up-to-the-minute tips and weather reports. "This has tremendous possibilities," Deppen reported.

Also during the meeting, five directors were elected to serve on the Board. They are: Katherine Fry, Manheim R7; Carlton Groff, Kirkwood R1; Robert Kindig, Conestoga R1; Kenneth Meck, Willow Street R1; and Doris Zimmerman, Ephrata R1.

Entertainment was provided by Connie and Carol Balmer, Litz

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