

Asst. U.S. Ag Secretary talks conservation

BY CURT HARLER

LANCASTER — John Crowell, assistant U.S. secretary of agriculture for forestry and conservation, was in Pennsylvania Tuesday to tour the state, meet conservation leaders, and discuss farm practices.

While in Lancaster County, Crowell defended the Reagan Administration's budget proposals for agriculture and conservation.

He told Lancaster Farming the Administration sees all areas of agricultural production as necessary. But he noted the Administration is equally concerned about all areas of the economy.

Crowell said conservation is not bearing a disproportionate share of the budget cuts, although most recent indications are the proposed conservation budget of \$700 million will represent cuts of \$40 million.

He said Reagan proposes only to cut \$10 million in conservation operating funds and \$3 million in salary money from the conservation dollars which originally were proposed in the Carter budget.

While pointing out that allows conservation about the same appropriation it had last year, he

admitted the effect of the proposal, because of inflation, would be roughly the same as a 10 percent cut.

Crowell toured Pennsylvania, starting in the western part of the Commonwealth and proceeding by helicopter to Harrisburg for a conference with state officials, then coming to Lancaster County.

He stopped at the John King farm near Mechanic Grove; Robert Kauffman's dairy operation at Peach Bottom; and Harold Rohrer's farm, Book Road, Lancaster.

In addition he saw a PL-566 flood control dam project in Chester County.

Farmers as well as administrators sounded off during the trip, dairymen noting they were less than pleased with the dairy support cuts made a week ago; and USDA administrators pointing to empty desks and noting, "The hiring freeze has done a number on us."

Beyond state boundaries, other groups were questioning policies being instituted by the new Administration.

National Farmers Union for one, has asked Reagan to increase ACP



Aaron Stauffer, chairman of the Lancaster Conservation District, welcomes Asst. U.S. Ag Secretary John Crowell to the County. Looking on, from left, are Resource Conservationist Timothy Breneisen; District Conservationist Warren Archibald; and Assistant Conservation Chief Rich Duesterhaus.



Lancaster County's new extension director Jay Irwin took John Crowell, left, on a tour of the Farm and Home Center. The Assistant Ag Secretary was in town briefly to talk and tour conservation farming.

funds by \$190 million. Crowell said during the interview in Lancaster he feels the Reagan funding will be sufficient.

In the area of farm chemicals, Crowell indicated there may be some hope for looser regulation of farm chemicals by the Environmental Protection Agency.

This would be in keeping with Reagan moves earlier in the week which eliminated some pollution requirements on cars.

"I believe the prior administration's views ignored utility and benefits of chemicals,"

Crowell said, referring to the Carter Administration.

Crowell told County Commissioner James Huber and County Extension Director Jay Irwin he feels strongly that land use planning should be kept local — on a state or county basis.

He said development should be channeled into areas that are less prime for agriculture.

Crowell noted the federal government could help local governments, though, by more

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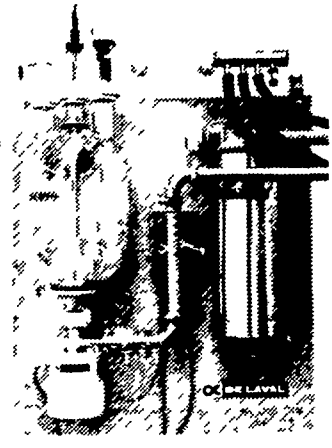


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