

Land preservation highlights seminar

BY LAURIE DOBROSKY
HARRISBURG — "Most farmers say they want to preserve the farm land, but don't stop us from selling out," remarked Amos Funk, a Lancaster farmer at the recent meeting of the Regional Farm-City Council. "But, we can't have our cake and eat it too." The seminar was held on May 28 and 29 here at the Marriott Inn.

If things keep going as they are Funk said in a discussion on land preservation, "by the year 2000 we will have lost half of the acres of farm land we had in 1960."

The Council held informative discussions on land preservation, water supplies and the economy.

In the first discussion on land preservation, one of the main topics of discussion was land zoning, and if it is the way to preserve agricultural land for the future.

Zoning works when the people who use it stick to the rules and grant very few variances, was the general decision of the panel.

One stumbling block in preserving land is nuisance laws. John Hoffman of the Pennsylvania Poultry Federation said, "with the nuisance laws, it is very easy to put a farm out of business." For this reason, the Federation is lobbying for legislation so that a farmer who has been in business for a number of years can't be sued for normal farming operations unless he is endangering a person's health or safety, he explained.

Panelists also discussed the state's water supply — its present and potential shortages. The panel members represented the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Council, and the Pennsylvania Farmers Association.

John McSparren, of the Department of Environmental Resources, stated that 300 water companies in Pennsylvania don't have adequate water supplies for all of their customers.

Some solutions to the water shortages are in developing new supplies, conservation and regulation.

Joseph Rossi, an economist for Commonwealth National Bank, discussed the trends in the economy and proposed federal budget cuts. Interest rates, he projected, would level off at about 15 percent.

Robert Bucher manager of the ag business department at Commonwealth was the next speaker.

"Money is tight and expensive, and the need for farmer efficiency is great," Bucher said. He added he feels the smaller, less efficient farmer is going to be eliminated, and larger farms will take over.

"There won't be corporate farms in the normal sense, just larger and fewer family farms," Bucher commented.

The Council also heard reports on the ways various states and counties in Pennsylvania promote

farm-city relationships. Winning counties — Franklin, Lebanon and Montour — shared their experiences with the group.

These counties held poster contests, job exchanges (farmers worked in the city and the city folks worked on the farm) and set up displays in shopping malls exhibiting tractors with price tags, farm costs and energy use.

The Council also heard from the states of New Jersey and Maryland on how they promoted good farm-city relationships in their states.

At the evening banquet, Future Farmers of America presented a film and Robert Rodale, president of Rodale Press spoke on the Cornucopia Project, his research into the loss of farm land in Pennsylvania and its implications.

The Farm-City Council is an organization used to promote better relationships between farmers and city dwellers.



Two speakers for land preservation at the Farm-City Council seminar were John Hoffman, left, and Amos Funk, right.

Hunterdon Co., N.J. gears up for Dairy Month

FLEMINGTON, N.J. — Plans are underway here for two important June Dairy Month activities: Dairy Farm Open House and the annual Hunterdon County Dairy Princess Contest, conducted by committees of the Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture.

The dairy farm open house this year will be on the Kuster Farms' 250-acre spread near Copper Hill, two miles south of Flemington Circle, just off route 202-31. Held traditionally on Fathers' Day, the

event will take place Sunday, June 21, reports Henry Kuehn, Raritan Township, chairman.

Ernest Kuster, Jr., family and farm staff will open their barns and facilities to the public, offering all an opportunity to see one of Hunterdon's most outstanding dairy farms.

The Kusters have 120 milk cows plus about 80 replacement heifers in their operation. The cropland fields of the two adjoining farms produce the hay, silage and much

of the grain consumed by the herd.

Visitors will have a chance to see the herd, observe feeding and milking, milk cooling and storage in a new bulk tank. There will be demonstrations of artificial breeding, exhibits of feeds and seeds, and more.

Wagon tours, tractor-drawn and horse-drawn will be offered during the open house hours, 1 to 5 p.m. Tours will cover most of the farm lanes which traverse the mile-long farm.

The Hunterdon County Dairy Princess, Chris Endris of Raritan Township, will be on hand, along with this year's dairy princess contestants, to serve snacks of cheese and crackers, and, of course, fresh milk.

Milk will be provided by Tuscan Dairies, Union, Buyer of milk from Kuster and many other dairy farmers in the county. Dairylea will provide the cheese.

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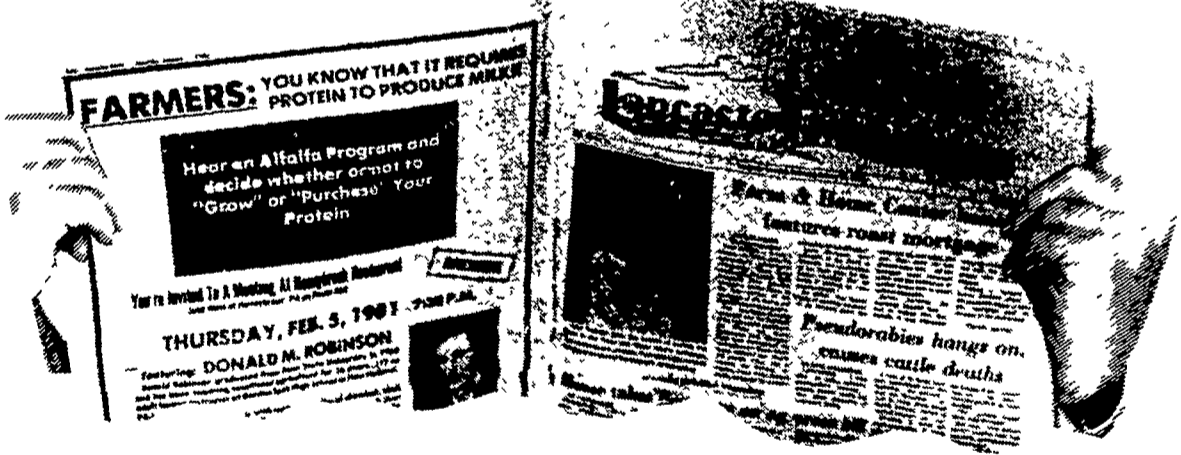
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