

USDA funds Lancaster's Conestoga Headwaters at \$1.93 million

LANCASTER — Lancaster Conestoga River headwaters is one of eight sites approved by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block last Friday in which the U.S. Department of Agriculture will be combatting agricultural-related pollution under the Rural Clean Water Program. The total nationwide cost of these eight projects has been estimated at \$20 million.

The voluntary federal program is designed to control nonpoint sources of pollution on privately owned farmland through financial and technical assistance of the USDA Soil Conservation Service and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Also assisting in the program will be the Cooperative Extension Service, Conservation District, Bureau of Forestry, Department of Environmental Resources and the local school districts' vocational agriculture departments and Young Farmer associations.

An amount of \$1.93 million has been set aside for the Conestoga here in Lancaster County. This is the first project of its kind to be undertaken in Pennsylvania.

According to Richard A. Pennay, acting chairman of the Pennsylvania State ASC Committee, the Conestoga was the number one priority project for the Commonwealth. He noted that a previous application for RCWP funds made last year was not funded due to the state's water

quality plan not being approved by the Environmental Protection Agency in time to qualify. He added the state plan still has only the conditional approval from EPA granted last July.

The close to \$2 million designated by USDA for the Conestoga is less than half of the total projects estimated cost of \$4,853,513. Besides the \$1.93 million in RCWP funds, it has been estimated the cost to the 400 farmers with critical conservation needs on the 16,000 acres of Lancaster County farmland will amount to slightly over \$2.3 million. An additional \$605,000 has been earmarked for other costs.

The Conestoga watershed is located in northeastern Lancaster county, consisting of over 100,000 acres and over 1,200 farms. A survey of the area, which was conducted in the preliminary stages of the application process, estimated the watershed's cropland supported approximately 36,000 acres of corn, 7,500 acres of small grains, 18,000 acres of hay and forage crops, along with 1,500 acres of tobacco and potatoes. And, almost all of the farms were involved in livestock, poultry, and/or dairy operations.

The study cited the major water quality problems in the Conestoga to be: nitrogen and phosphorus from manure, pesticides, sediment from intensive cropping, and high

coliform bacteria related to animal waste.

In defining what constitutes a critical nonpoint source pollution problem, the study identified them as:

- Those farms adjacent to major streams within the Conestoga Headwaters Area;
- Those farms adjacent to small tributaries within the watershed;
- Livestock farms having an animal unit density greater than 1.5 animal units per acre; and
- Those farms using high rates of commercially supplied nutrients and pesticides on all or most of their land.

To help solve these nonpoint source pollution problems, various conservation measures have been called for, with the federal government footing the bill for 50 to 75 percent of the cost in most cases. These best management practices, as they are referred to by the conservation agency personnel, include: establishing permanent vegetative cover, animal waste management systems, sediment basins, strip-cropping, cropland terraces, diversions, waterways, stream protection, tree planting, along with fertilizer, pesticide and cropland management.

Terraces and animal waste management systems received the greatest emphasis in the Conestoga application with close to \$1 million of the requested federal

monies going toward these two practices.

According to Warren Archibald, district conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service in Lancaster County, now that the project has been given the go ahead and financial support from Washington, D.C., the local field office will begin developing a work plan. After that, farmers can begin to file cost-share applications with Ray Brubaker, county executive director, for Lancaster ASCS.

When asked what he anticipates the response of farmers in the

Conestoga area to be when the funds become available, which should be hopefully before the end of the year, Archibald said, "There'll be a certain amount of people who will be at the door waiting to sign up, and there'll be others we'll have to convince they need our help."

Other states receiving RCWP funds this year are: Florida, \$1,338,100; Massachusetts, \$553,173; Minnesota, \$2,018,122; Nebraska, \$1,835,775; Oregon, \$2,011,099; South Dakota, \$1,097,548; and Virginia, \$1,889,995.

Masonic Homes gets Ayrshire award

ELIZABETHTOWN — The Ayrshire Breeders Association has announced that Masonic Homes Farms, Elizabethtown, qualified for their 15th Constructive Breeder Award during 1980.

In winning this event, the Masonic herd maintained a mature equivalent production average of 14,079 pounds of milk and 619 pounds of butterfat and had an average type appraisal score of 78 on 122 head of cattle.

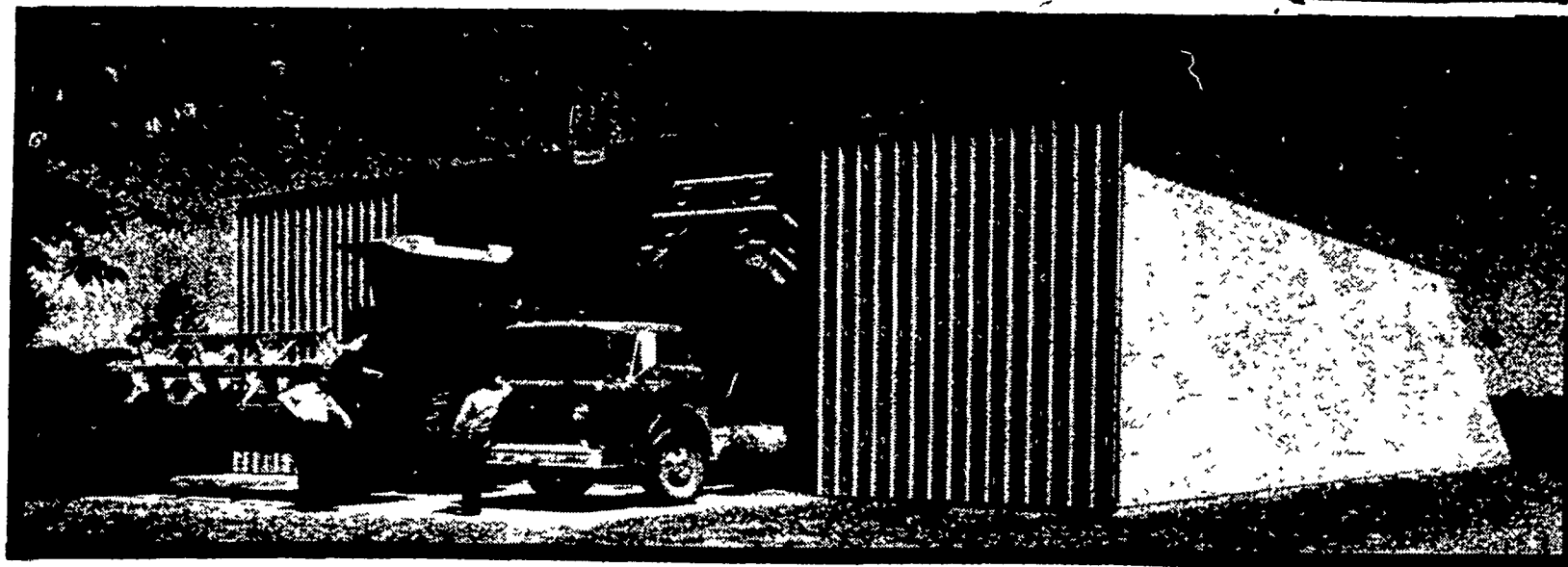
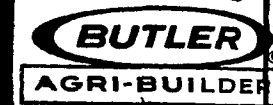
The Constructive Breeder Award is presented by the Association to honor Ayrshire Breeders enrolled on official DHIR testing program and who have

their herd appraised for type on a regular schedule. To qualify for this award, the majority of registered Ayrshires in the herd must be bred by the owner and maintain a high level of production with good type conformation.

The Ayrshire Breeders Association records and preserves the parentage of all registered Ayrshire in this country. In addition to registering over 10,000 Ayrshires each year, the organization conducts a wide range of programs and services to assist breeders and to promote and improve the Ayrshire Breed.

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