

LCCD joins pilot project

(Continued from Page A1)

Total project cost is estimated at \$18,210, but Brand admits, the cost doesn't stop here. "It will probably run a couple

hundred thousand every year for a couple years, but the overall use and help it will provide will far outway the costs. The funds needed depend on the extent to which

Lancaster County is hooked into the system," he said.

As stated on the project description submitted by the District, the project "seeks to

demonstrate an application of advanced remote sensing and geographical information systems technology in support of farm level land use decision-making."

A model, known as a Universal Soil Loss Equation model, will be developed and implemented on an information system drawn by a micro computer for use in conversation with farmers.

According to Tom Johnston, District administrator, the computer would probably be placed in the conservation office for easy access.

The system draws upon a digital data base derived from satellite and other secondary data sources. The farmer then can type in information about his farm and the system will draw upon pre-recorded files of geo-referenced (pictures taken from the satellite) data to determine the impact of a particular land-use decision.

Results can be reached describing the estimated soil loss, vegetative cover, estimated change in yield, and therefore possible income changes due to this change. Graphical and narrative summaries are also produced.

According to Brand, the project will be the first of its type to be used in the United States.

"There are several other states which are currently using projects similar in nature, but these projects are mostly for natural resource planning," he said.

He said Lancaster County was

chosen for the project because of its high farming reputation and because there are several areas which would merit the need for such a system.

The actual choice of Chickies Creek Watershed, according to Brand, came from the District.

"Chickies was picked because of its erosion problems and soil loss," he said.

Where the director and the District will seek funding next, is not known at this time, but the board's interest will remain if their vote Wednesday night is any indication of their interest.

In other business, the Board moved to support the Farmers Home Administration in their new Full Time Family Farmer and Rancher Program.

The nationwide program is designed to insure a continuing supply of full time farmers with help from established committees and a group of ag-community members who would serve as advisors for the chosen beginning farmer. For more information on the project, see page A18.

Also, the Board decided to look further into the possibilities of procuring funding for the Lancaster County Conservation District. In discussion and support of the proposed idea, Amos Funk, vice chairman of the Board, read and described a New Jersey law which establishes that state's conservation district's methods of receiving funds.

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improve overall type in the herd, particularly feet and legs, through the ABS GMS program.

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