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"Don't drink the water" fears haunt York farmer

BY JOYCE BUYP
Staff Correspondent

SEVEN VALLEYS — Two wellheads jut out of the ground, just a few yards from the upper end of Jim and Mary Lou Rohrbaugh's 65,000-bird pullet house.

Water from the 220-foot deep wells supplies the needs of the long poultry building, plus that of the hundred-head veal calf operation on the Rohrbaugh's farm, near Seven Valleys, York County.

Less than a hundred yards behind the 350-foot long pullet building, contoured field strips curve around the hillside abutting the Rohrbaugh property. Now owned by Roger W. Boser, that hillside is part of the property once owned by the city of York and, until it was shut down in 1975 by the Department of Environmental Resources, used by the city as a solid waste landfill.

Late in 1981, the Rohrbaughs received results of a test run by DER on water supplies that feed their poultry and veal building.

Six chemicals, believed to be leachate from the city's old landfill, are confirmed in the Rohrbaugh's farm water supply.

Their wells were first tested in

September 1981, as DER followed up on a complaint by a resident whose land adjoins another portion of the old landfill. Water from the plaintiff's well had a strong petroleum odor, according to DER's York sanitarian, Jeff Yorty. Lab tests revealed the presence of several volatile organic contaminants.

Further water samplings, taken from five additional properties, were then run at the DER lab.

"Some came up with the same chemicals. Some were clean," says Yorty.

When those first results of the September test finally reached the Rohrbaughs in December, Mary Lou remembers that they didn't become too concerned. Three chemicals were definitely in the water, and there were traces of possibly three others, but the levels were relatively small.

That report indicated that the Rohrbaugh's farm water supplies contained three parts per billion of 1, 1, Dichloroethane and 1, 1, 1 Trichloroethane, and two p.p.b. of Tetrachloroethene.

But they wanted to run ad-

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"What's in the water?" and "Who'll pay to have it corrected?" are two worries to poultry and veal farmers Jim and Mary Lou Rohrbaugh, Seven Valleys, York Co. Behind the couple are the two wellheads for the livestock

water supplies. The hill that rises directly behind the poultry building is part of the old York city landfill, believed to be leaking two contaminants into the water supply.

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Lancaster gets NK research center

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
LANCASTER — The expanding corn breeding program of Nor-

throp King Co., which is aimed at developing more energy-efficient, high-yielding regional hybrids, is moving into Pennsylvania with the location of a new research center in Lancaster County.

The new center — the latest of nine NK regional research facilities established in North America — is located on the Clarence A. Keener Jr. farm, R1 Manheim. The farm is located along Junction Road, about three miles northwest of East Petersburg.

The center, which is responsible for the company's research throughout the Northeast, is opening with about 20 to 30 acres of initial corn research plots this year, with expansion over the next few years to an 80 to 100-acre facility, according to James Radtke, of Northrup King, corn breeder who is setting up the center.

A second corn breeder, Doug Jondle, will join the center's

research staff following graduation from the University of Wisconsin in June. Radtke, a doctoral graduate of the University of Minnesota, comes to Lancaster County from another Northrup King research center, which was established at St. Joseph, Ill. in 1979.

Alfalfa research will be added to the center's program in the fall, according to Radtke.

"We plan to add an alfalfa breeder toward the end of the summer and plant the first research plots in the fall," he said.

The Northeast Research Center in Lancaster County will have responsibility for the company's breeding and testing program, which stretches from Virginia north into New England. The company's closest other research center along the East Coast is located in North Carolina.

"The Lancaster County research plots primarily will be utilized in developing hybrids in the 110 to

120-day maturity range," explained Dr. James Mock, director of corn research, from Northrup King's research headquarters in Stanton, Minn.

The Northeast Research Center also will be responsible for the development of earlier maturing varieties for areas such as New York and New England and later varieties for more southern areas extending as far as Virginia, Mock added.

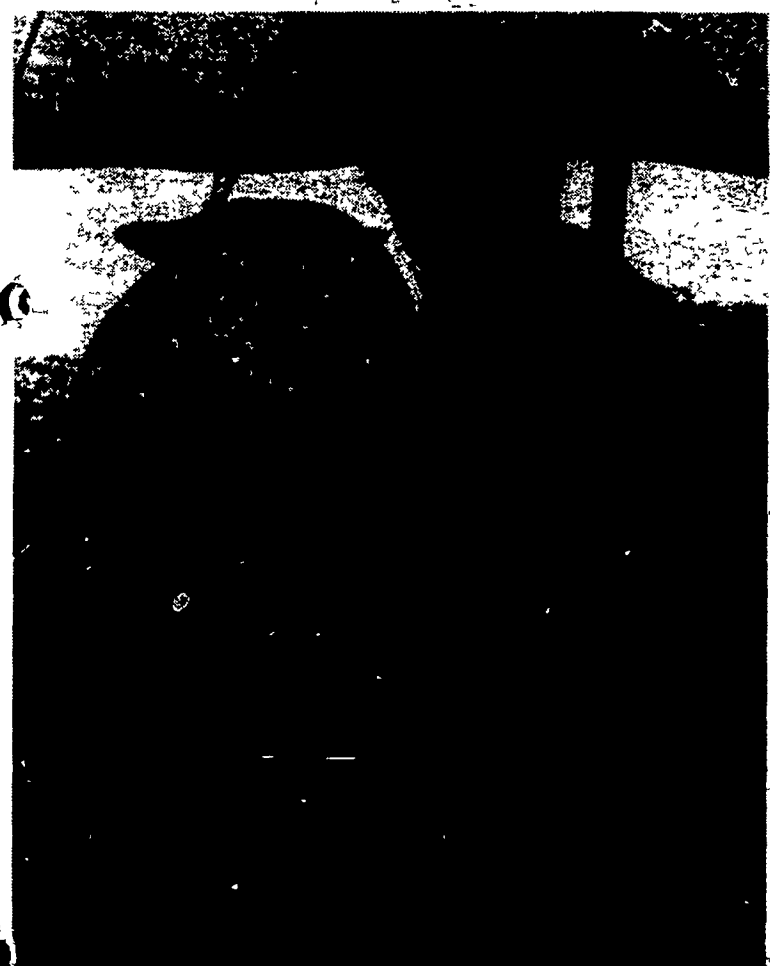
Mock, who came to Northrup King in 1978 after several years as a corn breeder at Iowa State University, has pioneered the concept of placing particular emphasis on the breeding of cold tolerance into corn hybrids.

Beginning last year, NK became the first corn seed company to rate its hybrids for cold tolerance.

To meet the needs of this expanded research emphasis, the number of regional research centers has been increased in the

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Mellot's champion showman



Grand Champion Showman honors went to Sue Mellot, McConnellsburg, during this year's Penn State Little International Livestock Exposition, held last Saturday. After capturing Champion Sheep Showman honors with her Dorset lamb, Mellot also exhibited a horse, beef animal, and swine to win the coveted honor. See story, page A26.

New swine rules take effect May 19

HARRISBURG — New swine health rules requiring identification of feeder pigs, market hogs and breeding swine become effective May 19, according to Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hollowell.

Hollowell said the purpose of the new rules is to help control the movement of swine in the state in order to control the spread of disease to other herds.

"The new identification requirements for feeder pigs, market hogs and breeding swine will permit easier trace back of diseased animals to their original

herds," he said.

"Every producer and swine feeder in the state will be issued a herd identification number which will be registered with the agriculture department. Breeding animals must be individually identified as well," Hollowell said.

Hollowell warned farmers that their swine may not be moved intrastate without proper identification. Swine identification can be in the form of an ear tattoo, back slap tattoo, ear tag or other device approved by the department.

"The most reliable means of permanent identification is the ear,

or back slap tattoo," Hollowell said. He urged producers to apply their herd number by ear tattoo to all newborn pigs or back slap tattoo to market hogs.

Applications for assignment of a herd identification number are available at the department's seven regional offices, county extension offices, livestock auctions or hog slaughter operations.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Bureau of Animal Industry, Pa. Dept. of Agriculture, 2301 N. Cameron St., Harrisburg, PA 17110, telephone 717/783-5301.