

AFT visits Lanc. Ag Preserve Board meeting

LANCASTER — Lancaster County is an "unparalleled agricultural area; a national treasure equally as valuable to United States agriculture as the Grand Canyon is to the National

Park System," remarked Ed Thompson of the American Farmland Trust last Friday during the meeting of the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board. The American Farmland Trust

is a national, non-profit organization, formed to protect farmland opportunities.

Staff members of the AFT were impressed by statistics like: Lancaster County produces one-

seventh of all agricultural products in Pennsylvania; and a 60-acre farm sold for \$5,100 per acre (there were four active bidders, all farmers).

The AFT also listened to various members of the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board as they stated their views on farmland preservation. Bill Forrey, representing the Lancaster County Home Builders and developers, stated housing is just as important as farmland. He added that he supports the concept of setting aside large contiguous blocks of land which developers will "stay out of," but in return they would like higher density developments

and less opposition to developing non-designated agricultural land. He also questioned whether the Agricultural Preserve Board should be getting into the real estate business.

David Fisher, a New Holland-area farmer, stated that most Amish farmers "want the right to farm, and are not interested in financial reimbursement for keeping their land in agriculture."

Action was taken by the Agricultural Preserve Board to work with County Vo-Ag teachers to prepare a one-week curriculum on farmland preservation with assistance from the AFT. Also, the Board voted to delineate agricultural preserve areas within townships.

Pennsylvania has a branch of the American Farmland Trust, which is cooperating with the Pennsylvania Farmers Association.



Officers of the American Farmland Trust, a national, non-profit organization for the protection of farmland, met with the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board last Friday. Pictured from left are: Aaron Stauffer, vice chairman Lancaster Ag Preserve Board; Doug Wheeler, president, AFT; Amos Funk, chairman, Lancaster Ag Preserve Board; Norm Berg, consultant to AFT and former SCS administrator; and Lancaster Co. Commissioner Jim Huber.

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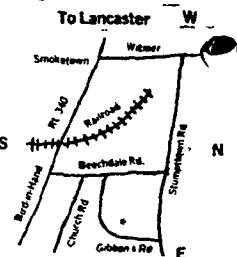


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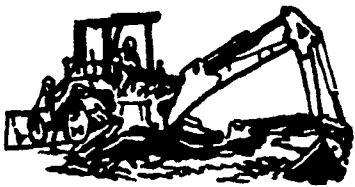
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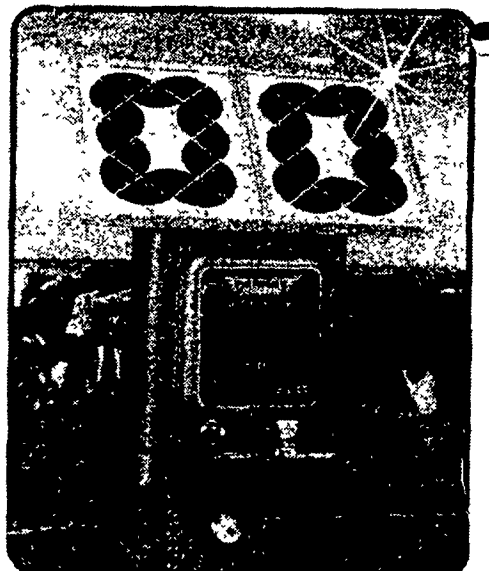
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