

# Johnsongrass, salt concerns expressed in Chester

WEST CHESTER — Directors of the Chester/Delaware Farmers' Association heard final details of their spring meeting, set for March 29, and considered requests for help in controlling Johnsongrass and salt run-off from highways at their monthly meeting in Downingtown last week.

Denise Wilkinson, Landenberg,

Women's Committee Chairman, said that planning for the spring meeting is complete. It will be held at the West Fallowfield Christian School, Cochranville. "The business meeting will include committee and legislative reports, voting on dues increase and any other pertinent business to come before the members," Wilkinson

said. County Commissioners and County Legislators have been invited. Entertainment will be by the Troubadours, a Country and Gospel singing group of Elverson. Reservations can be made by sending \$6.50 per person to Willa Mast, R2, Box 420, Parkesburg, 19365. (phone: 857-9216) "It is essential that these reservations be sent in immediately," Wilkinson said.

Lewis Wilkinson, Landenberg, told Directors that Johnsongrass, a noxious weed, is taking over corn fields and soybean fields in Chester County. "The State of Delaware has a toll free number to report Johnsongrass infestations along state highways. In response to that phone call, the State will send out someone to spot spray that section with herbicides", Wilkinson said. He recommended that the Directors request PennDOT to set up a similar program in Pennsylvania.

Wilkinson indicated that this scattering of Johnsongrass seed is moving north from the south. "Geese carrying the seed would be one method of distribution. Truckers carrying hay or other vegetative materials may have Johnsongrass that could be scattered." Wilkinson emphasized that "farmers could help by spot spraying any isolated areas of Johnsongrass with herbicides in their area."

Wilkinson was also disturbed by the run-off of de-icing salt from

highways. "Excessive salting of highways runs off into drainage waterways. The salt kills the grass, the wheat, whatever vegetation is growing. The rapidly flowing water then cuts gullies across farmers fields. Farmers are being blamed unfairly for soil erosion and resulting sediment accumulation in streams and Chesapeake Bay," Wilkinson explained.

Wilkinson admitted that de-icing is important for winter travel. He suggested that "PennDOT consider a higher proportion of anti-skid material in the application. Also the use of more efficient spreaders to efficiently apply the material." He also pointed out that many salt storage piles are not under permanent cover. Directors suggested that Wilkinson's con-

cerns he turned over to the Local Affairs Committee for the Farmers' Association.


In other reports, Board members were told that 24 4-H members attended a one-day session to learn the principles of Cooperatives. The conference was sponsored by the Chester-Delaware Cooperative Council.

Tom Merroth, Guthriesville, Membership Chairman, said that there are now 683 members signed up for this year. Directors made plans to complete the membership drive by April 1.

Don Missimer, Regional Field Director, said that the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association Building Fund is 28% complete. He invited all Farmers' Association members to visit the new addition when it opens on March 27.



Johnsongrass has been cited by county extension agents in Pennsylvania as one of the greatest weed threats in corn, particularly in the southeastern portion of the Commonwealth.



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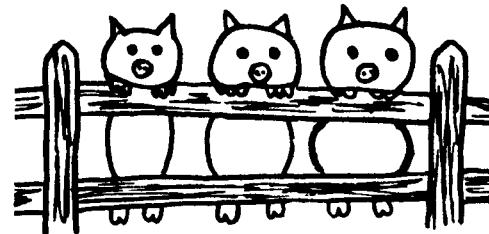
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