

Delaware residents want farmland preserved

DOVER, Del. — An overwhelming majority of Delawareans believe that the present Route 13 should be upgraded to protect the maximum amount of farmland according to the results of a recent statewide survey.

The survey was conducted by the University of Delaware's College of Urban Affairs using a scientifically selected sampling representing Delaware's adult population. The results have an accuracy of plus or minus 7%.

300 Delawareans, ranging in age from 20 to 86, were asked a series of questions concerning the loss of farmland in the First State. Their responses show farmland preservation is no longer just a cause of concern for farmers in Delaware, according to Michael H. McGrath, Aglands Manager with the Delaware Department of Agriculture.

"The people of Delaware clearly are concerned with the loss of farmland and they agree that some attention should be given to the problem. Farmland preservation is no longer just a farmers issue, but an issue for everyone," said McGrath.

"A perfect example of this is the

fact that 93% of the people surveyed said that they agreed that the present Route 13 should be upgraded to protect maximum amounts of farmland. Those who say our residents want Route 13 improved regardless of the impact on farming obviously don't reflect the overwhelming opinion of our people."

Survey respondents were also asked their feelings on construction of a new North/South highway that would take productive farmland out of production. 72.9% of those responding disagreed that a new North/South highway should be constructed regardless of the impact on farmland, while over 68% said the new construction should minimize the impact on Delaware farmlands.

82% of the respondents said the loss of farmland is a serious problem in Delaware.

Donald J. Lynch, Delaware Agriculture Secretary, says the survey results will add weight to the department's farmland preservation efforts.

"The farmers of Delaware have raised their voice in the past. Now we can see that everyone is concerned, and the farmers represent

a majority when they speak on this issue. Hopefully these figures will impress on the planners of Route 13 improvements that farmland preservation is a serious issue to Delawareans, and it should play an important part in any future decisions," he said.

Questions concerning

agricultural lands preservation methods were also asked, and again the results were surprising, according to department officials.

Creating agricultural districts received the most favorable response when compared to using State monies to purchase development rights and using

exclusive zoning to forbid other development.

The survey was conducted for the Delaware Department of Agriculture by the College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy as part of the 1984 Delaware Household Survey.

Dairy advertising seen as help

UNIVERSITY PARK — Now that a stepped up milk advertising and promotion campaign is about to begin, many dairy farmers and government officials are wondering if this will help solve problems within the industry. Looking at past studies and the attitudes of people in the dairy business, the future looks a little brighter for dairy farmers, say Jack Kirkland, Penn State Extension agricultural economist.

The advertising and promotion campaign, part of the Milk Diversion Bill passed in November 1983, calls for a deduction of about 15 cents per hundred-weight or two cents per gallon from all dairy farmers. This money, about \$140

million, will finance the advertising and promotion.

This money could help close the gap between what the dairy industry spends to promote its product and what other beverage manufacturers, including soda and beer makers, spend to promote their products, says Kirkland.

With the dairy industry spending \$60 million a year, as it is now, other industries are outspending the milk promoters \$47 to \$1. If the dairy industry increases the amount it spends to \$140 million, other companies may feel more competition.

Increased spending may also help to reduce the large surpluses the industry is now suffering.

According to a study conducted a few years ago where 15 cents per hundredweight was spent on fluid milk promotion in six milk markets, sales increased by 4.5 percent. An increase of this size, if achieved nationally, could remove about 2.4 billion pounds of milk, or about 12.5 percent of the surplus in 1983.

Another more recent study using data from July 1980 to June 1982 shows that for each \$1,000,000 increase in generic advertising and promotion of cheese, sales would increase by 22.7 million pounds.

These very positive research findings indicate that much can be accomplished to increase the sale of milk products through advertising and promotion, Kirkland says.

Members of the industry are also very positive about what advertising can do for sales of milk products. Some feel that a nationwide advertising campaign would be very effective and may even work so well that it will get rid of the surplus entirely.

"Surely an increased advertising program for dairy products will give a much needed boost to the industry and will go far in solving the surplus problem," says Kirkland.

Better milk group plans picnic

HAMBURG — With their main reasoning that a better glass of milk will mean more per capita consumption, a new type of dairy organization is emerging.

The new group, with no official name as yet, is currently looking for interested breeders in Berks, Lehigh, Lebanon, and surrounding counties to support their efforts to improve milk. To further these efforts, a picnic and meeting is scheduled for next Saturday, June 16, at the Longmeadows Farm of Dr. and Mrs. Robert C. Dreisbach, Hamburg, Pa. Starting time is 11 a.m. and a covered dish will be appreciated.

Headed by President William Zollers, R1 Mertztown, the organization is seeking ways to increase milk quality, increase consumption, and provide fair payment to dairymen willing to produce an excellent product. Convinced of the marketing advantages of a higher protein product and the fairness of a protein pricing system, the group consists of breeders of each dairy breed of cattle.

The featured speaker at the picnic will be Mrs. Betsy Booth, Green Dream Farm, New Hampshire. Mrs. Booth and her husband, Bud, milk registered Jerseys and currently receive protein premiums for their milk. She will also have a jetshake machine along to demonstrate how it is used in schools to improve the product and increase consumption of milk.

All interested breeders are invited. For more information please contact Helene Dreisbach at (215) 562-3966. — R.P.

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