

Lancaster Farming

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Six-farm methane digester study nearing completion

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
SPRINGVILLE — A unique study by the Lancaster Conservation District to see if manure from six neighboring farms can be collected for generating electricity in a cooperative methane digester is nearing completion.

Robert E. Gregory, Conservation District administrator, gave a progress report on the six-farm study at a Methane Digester Workshop held Tuesday at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center. A similar workshop was held Wednesday in Somerset.

The cooperative digester feasibility study, which was funded by the Governor's Energy Council, is a unique phase of widespread efforts under way in Lancaster County to update manure handling and disposal procedures, which are related to the nitrate loading of underground water supplies, area streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

Gregory set the stage for the digester report with a few essential agricultural figures:

"In Lancaster County, we have 25 percent of the livestock units in the state and only 7.4 percent of the cropland," Gregory said. "This results in a manure application average of 13.5 tons per acre, which is three times the amount spread in neighboring counties."

While admitting that Lancaster County plays a sizable role in the nutrient loading problem of the Chesapeake Bay, Gregory said that agriculture's responsibility must be kept in balance with that of residential and industrial segments of the area.

The six-farm cooperative methane study is located at Springville, north of Ephrata, and
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Pa. pork fund is suggested

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HARRISBURG — A Pennsylvania Pork Fund which would come from a statewide checkoff on swine sales and be used for promotion and indemnification has been suggested by Rep. Terry Scheetz, hog producer and member of the State Legislature from Lancaster County.

Rep. Scheetz said he is offering the pork fund concept as a starting point for discussion of a way in which pork producers can establish a self-help program for continuing promotional purposes and indemnification to owners whose herds may be depopulated due to disease.

"This fund concept has been formulated with the help of three members of the Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council," Scheetz said.

"It's being offered as a starting
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Naming of his three-year-old Holstein as Supreme Champion of Elizabethtown Fair brings smile to face of Tom McCauley.

At Elizabethtown Fair

Supreme champ is crowned

ELIZABETHTOWN — It's a new experience for judges and exhibitors alike.

In the showing at the same time are four grand champions of their species — dairy, sheep, market steer and hog.

The four are not competing against each other directly but more against the "ideal" of their species. The judges — and there are four — must walk around with a picture of that ideal in the back of their minds and then pick the one of the four that comes closest.

This unique livestock competition describes the naming of the Supreme Champion of the

Elizabethtown Fair. It was tried last year and proved so popular it was continued this year.

But the fair committee learned at least one lesson from last year. You don't let the hog run loose in the ring with the steer and cow. There was a bit of mild pandemonium last year so the committee had the hog penned up this year in a corner of the ring.

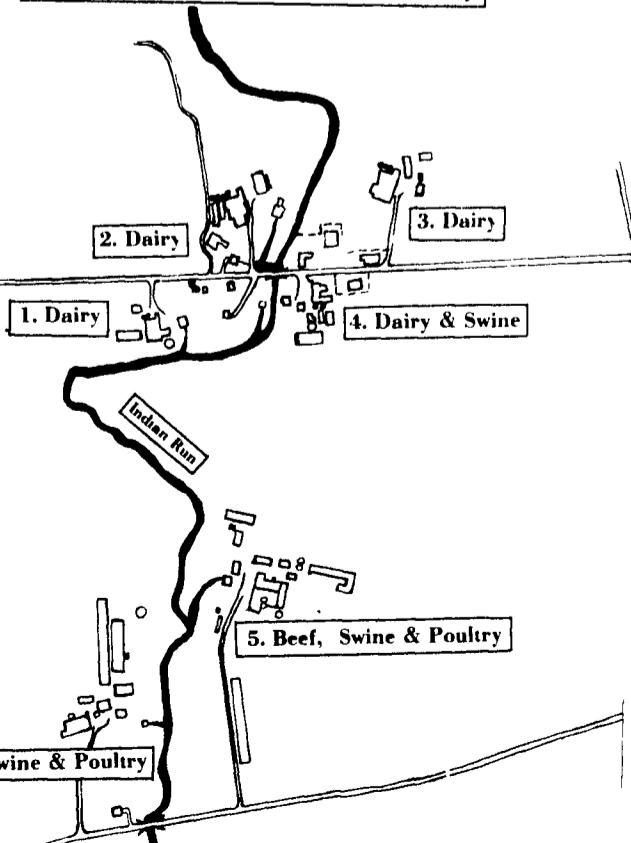
This year, the competition ended up largely between the three-year-old dairy cow of Tom McCauley and the Dorset ewe lamb of Margaret Herr. And in this lies a bit of unfairness of such competition. Both the cow and lamb

have been shown widely in other competition and are breeding representatives of their species. Undoubtedly, it gives them the edge over the strictly market animal representatives.

But the judges had high praise for each of the four though. Judges representing their species were Gerald Tracy, farm manager of Masonic Homes, sheep; Gary Dean, Lancaster Farm Credit, beef; Chet Hughes, Lancaster livestock agent, swine; and Lew Ayers, retired Ephrata vo-ag teacher, dairy.

"She shows an extreme amount
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Cooperative Methane Digester Study



Six farms with a heavy livestock concentration in Northern Lancaster County is studied as possible site for cooperative methane digester.

Contract growers fear quotas under any egg marketing order

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
LANCASTER — Family poultry farmers, particularly contract growers, expressed grave fears and reservations Tuesday night about any Egg Marketing Order that could include production allotments or quotas.

Among the fears expressed at a Pennsylvania Poultry Federation session at which Jerry Weber, chairman of the United Egg Producer's Egg Marketing Order Committee, outlined possible options under any Order:

—How will quotas or allotments be assigned — to the property or building of the grower or to the contractor or on a percentage to both depending on the contract?

—The family poultry farmers present left no doubt that they

want any quotas to be on a building or property basis and not the contractor.

If quotas would be assigned to contractors, they feared:

—Big integrators could move allotments around as they wished and some growers could end up with empty houses and no quota to fill them.

—If a contractor pulls out of a contract and takes all or most of a quota along, what would the grower be left with?

—Some growers are paid on a flat rate and would have no quota at all.

—Since large operators have a much bigger quota base, any possible future expansion would be limited to them.

A basic question asked at the

session: Would any egg marketing order protect the family farmer?

The question went basically unanswered, but there was no doubt how a number of poultry farmers felt about the answer.

UEP is now conducting a straw pole survey among "producers" to see what they think of any Egg Marketing Order and the possible options that might be in it. Survey deadline is today, but Weber said replies received within the next few days would be included.

Based on the survey results, UEP wants to make a decision on whether to move ahead quickly, if producers favor an Order. UEP thinks the ball should be started

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