

Bay cleanup

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their way into the Chesapeake Bay, lies half of the reason for the twin news conferences held Monday.

The Dauphin County Conservation District also held its meeting on the Millersburg banks of the Susquehanna to launch its public fund drive for \$350,000 to build a new Ag Center at the intersection of Rts. 225 and 325 north of Dauphin.

In a resolution passed by the District, a 13-member committee was created to oversee the fund drive, which will complement \$250,000 already earmarked by the Dauphin County Commissioners.

Members of the committee representing ag groups include Ronald Kopp, Middletown; Wilmer Campbell, Halifax; Pat Baum, Elizabethtown; Bob Messick, Elizabethtown; Dwight Hoffman, Halifax; Jay Book and Richard Hann, Hershey.

The new Agriculture and Natural Resources Service Center, to be built on land being donated by farmer Meade Detweiler, will contain meeting and office facilities for the Conservation District, SCS, ASCS, Extension and others.

And, following their riverside meeting, the Dauphin conservationists boarded the ferry with their counterparts from Perry and other nearby counties for the midriver address by Swartz on Pennsylvania's approach to helping to clean up the Bay.

In his talk, Swartz admitted that not everyone is in agreement with the continuation of a voluntary approach to get farmers to better manage their nutrients and prevent their runoff.

A million dollars of first-year money put up by the State and Federal Government will go toward aiding farmers install

Better Management Practices. Maximum available per farm will be \$30,000 on an 80 percent cost-share basis funded by government.

The DER will be adding three field people to work with farmers, including a mobile nutrient testing laboratory.

Various BMP demonstration

projects will be funded.

Penn State will handle research on better nitrogen soil tests and making BMP's more efficient.

The Pa. Association of Conservation Districts will handle publicity and promotion.

While initial efforts will be concentrated in the critical watersheds of the Lower Susquehanna, it is hoped that succeeding efforts will be expanded upstream, too.

Swartz outlined a lengthy litany of figures showing ag's responsibility in loading the Bay with nutrients, principally nitrates and phosphates.

Things like:

—Sixty percent of phosphate non-point nutrient runoff and 85 percent of nitrate non-point runoff comes from ag lands.

—In the Upper Conestoga area of Lancaster County, some farmers use as much as 203 pounds more of nitrogen per acre than they need.

—Problems are worse on rented land and one-third of cropland in the River Basin is leased.

—About 1.8 million acres of land need some sort of conservation practices and BMP's are needed by 60 percent of livestock farmers and 7,800 of the 13,000 dairy farmers.

The Commonwealth program has been tagged "The Pennsylvania Ag Nutrient Abatement Program."

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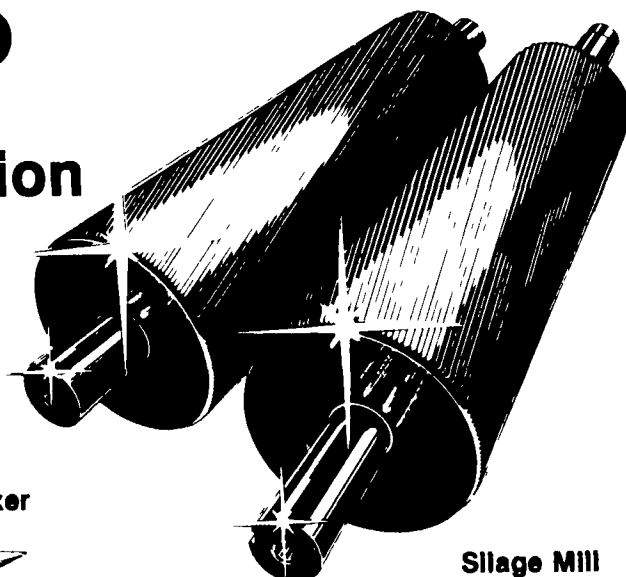
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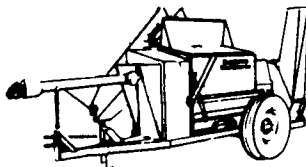
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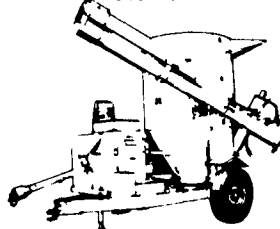


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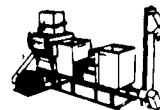
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