

Horse expansion can cause erosion problems

WEST CHESTER — "Horse owners keep twelve horses on three acres of pasture, then wonder why the grass is short."

"Chester County is attracting horse owners who are familiar with the feeding and care of horses but who know very little about the feeding and care of the soil that grows the pasture, hay and grain for the feeding of those horses."

"This has been a good year for growing grass. Don't know what they will do in a dry year."

"It will probably get worse before the horse owners realize that they need to use good conservation practices on their land."

Such statements resulted when directors of the Chester County Conservation District were discussing the impact of increasing numbers of horses in the county during their monthly meeting held recently in West Chester.

Pownall Jones, Toughkenamon, noted destructive erosive effects of overgrazing the pastures. "With no protective cover, the horses' hoofs compact the top soil. With heavy rains, the valuable topsoil is eroded and washed away," he observed.

Charles Harris, Cochranville,

mentioned the increase in number of horse farms, riding rings and paddocks in that area. Directors agreed that special efforts should be made to provide soil/water conservation information and assistance to horse owners.

Debra Granison, County Director of ASCS, said that the deadline for assistance for reestablishing washed-out conservation practices had been extended until Oct. 31. Farmers may also receive assistance for stream bank restoration and fence rehabilitation, Granison said.

Jenny Russell, Lewisville, Chairman of the Awards Committee, said that the Committee is seeking nominations for Chester County Conservation Farmer of the Year award. "They will be judged", Russell said, "on the basis of sound conservation measures on their farm operation. Also considered will be manure management practices, pesticide management, and successful application of low-cost practices to conserve and protect soil and water resources."

"Nominations may be made by neighbors, wives or husbands, or from the farmer himself or herself", Russell said. Application blanks may be obtained from the

District Office, 235 W. Market St., West Chester, PA 19382—or by calling 696-5126. "Nominations should be returned by Nov. 1", Russell emphasized.

Russell also reported on the cost-share program for the Chesapeake Bay clean-up. "Water quality and nutrient management are the priority practices", she said. Farmers with the "worst-case" problems will be given highest priority according to the guidelines issued by the State Bureau of Soil/Water Conservation. Approximately one million dollars is being made available for the 6 lower counties in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Only the Elks

Creeks and the Octoraro Creek feed into the Bay from Chester County. It is estimated that there could be one hundred fifty to two hundred thousand dollars available for conservation practices in Chester County. With up to an 85% cost-share, as many as twelve or fifteen farmers could cost-share in the program.

Russell reported that tentative approval had been given by the State Educational Sub-committee for funding of three demonstration projects in the County. One would be the seed money for a crops improvement association. Another would be the development of a self-guided tour of manure

management facilities. The third would be no-till demonstration plots established in cooperation with vocational agriculture departments in the schools.

Land owners accepted by the Directors as Cooperators with the District and eligible for the technical services of the Soil Conservation, U.S.D.A. were Jonathan S. Esh, W. Nottingham Twp.; Marc S. Balick, Elk Twp.; Patrice Miller/Seder, E. Fallowfield Twp.; Mrs. Irma Stoltzfus, Valley Twp.; Eugene Liesau, S. Coventry Twp.; James I. Plyler, Jr., Newlin Twp. and William H. Sawyer, W. Vincent Twp.

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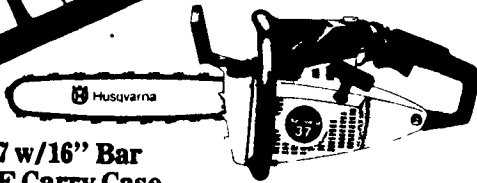
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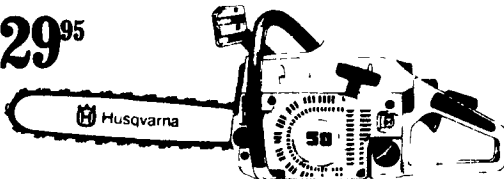
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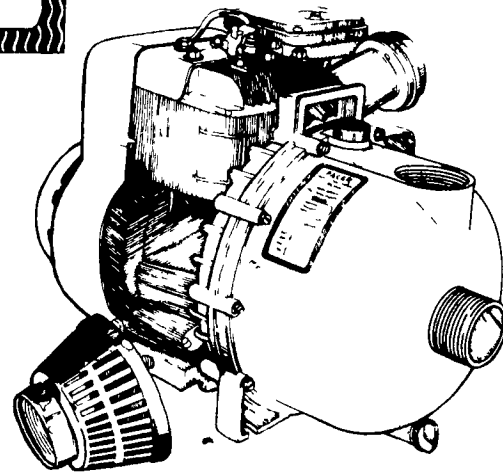
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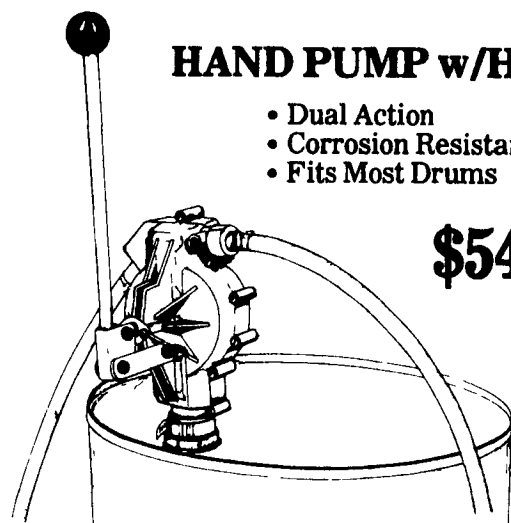
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