

Equipment Operators meet for annual workshop

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS
Staff Correspondent

LEESPORT — Jack W. Schonely, district manager of the Berks County Conservation District, welcomed "land movers and improvers" to the 30th Annual Equipment Operators Workshop in Berks County last week.

The workshop featured speakers from conservation services and commissions, and representatives from UGI, AT&T, and Texas Eastern. Many area contractors were represented as efforts centered on awareness of soil conservation and underground utilities when digging.

Bernard Morrissey, representing Bernard Morrissey Insurance, Inc., and the Pennsylvania Land

Improvement Contractors, began the meeting with a film presentation on land conservation.

The Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA) represents contractors who protect the land and water resources through modern, efficient conservation techniques. It is the leading voice in the United States for the conservation contractor.

The LICA sponsors contractor workshops, management seminars, and various publications to educate its members on current, efficient ways of conserving natural resources. Members include contractors who build or work on dams and related structures, drainage systems, farm ponds, land clearing, irrigation,

seeding and sodding, surveying, waste treatment, and many other related practices.

Morrissey informed the contractors that the Pennsylvania LICA is currently lobbying to get bills passed to help contractors and to make their jobs easier.

Only three percent of land feeds four billion people," the film informed those attending the workshop. With an emphasis on controlling erosion on existing farmland, Morrissey and Mike Allyger, director of the LICA chapter, encouraged involvement from contractors.

Duane Pysher, district conservationist, and Roy Shryock, conservation technician, were on hand to review current conservation concerns with the contractors. Representing the USDA Soil Conservation Service, Pysher presented ideas on keeping the soil where it belongs." The ideas applied to the condition of the soil, and vegetation applications. Adding that Berks County soils are naturally acidic, Pysher recommended the use of bio-degradable netting to hold the soil.

Shryock discussed terrace methods of water control, and stressed the uniformity of farm land if possible.

Ammon Ziegenfuss, waterways conservation officer, represented the Pennsylvania Fish Commission at the meeting. Contractors are liable for any fish that may be killed during a work project," he told operators, "anytime working within 25 feet of water shed or stream." A permit is needed from DER.

Morrissey followed with a discussion of adequate insurance coverage for anyone digging underground. He recommended a minimum of one and one-half million dollars coverage for most contractors. If a company is not covered, he told operators, a utility can attach the assets of the company if a claim is filed for



hitting an underground gas line or utility.

The Pennsylvania One Call System was advocated for all equipment operators. A telephone system designed to alert all its participating utilities when someone is excavating, the network has greatly improved utility-contractor relations and radically lowered the number of times a utility line has been hit and consequently, shut down.

UGI representative Tom Price informed operators that their line was hit 200 times in 1983, and was lowered to 124 hits in 1984, much to the credit of the One Call System.

Bill Kiger, director of operations of the Pennsylvania One Call System, urged contractors to use this system before digging. "Before You Dig Anywhere in Pennsylvania - Call: 1-800-242-1776 - Investigate Before You Excavate," the system's signs ad-

vised. The system allows this free call to alert all of the participating utilities at the same time and enables the excavator to answer a few questions concerning the location of the digging site and the nature of the excavation. Utilities will be notified and the location request will be filed.

Paul Kramer, Texas Eastern, informed operators that for every mile of line that has to be shut down, it costs the contractor \$6,000. The line must be shut down after a hit" and the gas must be released.

The informative workshop also featured speakers from Concrete Safety Systems, Bethel, Reading Branch of C.N.A., and Design Data of Lancaster, A.T.&T.

Displays, handouts, and safety signs were available for all participants as equipment operators were urged to construct conservation measures safely."

Maryland's Farm Fairs set for '85

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Over 2 million persons attend Maryland agricultural fairs and shows annually.

The interest in the agricultural fair program expands continuously as new and exciting entertainment and educational events are added to fair schedules. You can view agricultural exhibits and talk directly with producers during the Maryland Agriculture Week program held at selected malls throughout the state from late January through March.

In the spring youth exhibitions and livestock promotion are held at the Pork Expo and Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival.

The fair season kicks off in July with county fair programs conducted in all counties throughout the state. City and country folk alike enjoy the opportunity for hands-on experience with farm animals and products. They can view prize winning quilts and cakes while their children thrill to the sights and sounds of the carnival.

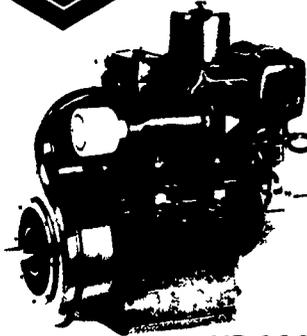
Autumn is a beautiful time to view the fruits of the harvest at fairs in Southern Maryland and community shows held throughout Western Maryland. The year closes with an extravaganza at Lexington Market in Baltimore by the Maryland Beekeepers.

A listing of all agricultural exhibitions is available, free of charge, from the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board. Requests should be directed to "Fair & Show Schedule", Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.





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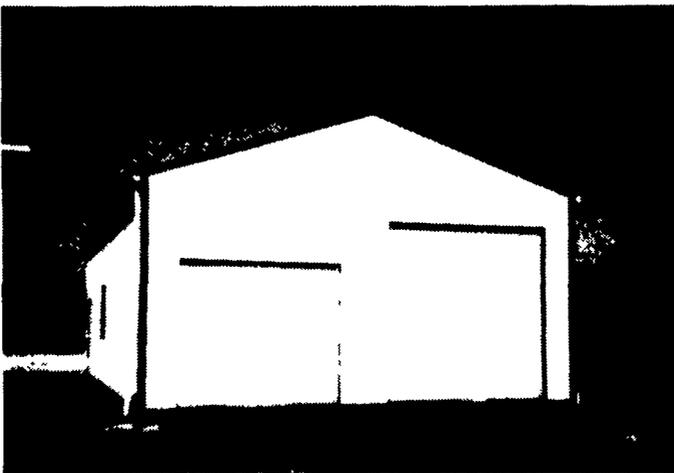
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