

# Pioneering Developer To Build Homes On Undesirable Farmland

BY PAT PURCELL

In what is being heralded as a pioneering effort by a builder and developer, Lancaster County may have what is being touted as the first residential community deliberately constructed on undesirable farmland that appears to be unsuitable for a housing complex.

In Manor Township, on route 999, just west of North Duke Street in Millersville, Forest Homes Inc., builders and E. B. Able Construction Company have joined forces to establish a 65 unit community on a site which challenges the developer with steep slopes, a ravine, natural springs and bedrock which has been measured to 32 inches below that surface as well as protruding from the ground.

"I had no idea of the steepness of the slopes you have to deal with here. I would guess the erosion if this were farmed would be near 10 tons per acre. This is not going to be easy to develop, but this is the way we need to move in order to preserve our farmland," said Amos Funk, President, of the Lancaster County Agricultural Preservation Board, at the ground breaking ceremonies held on Wednesday.

"This is a whole new approach," Funk added. "This is a pilot project. If this can be done here then it can be done anywhere in the county."

James E. Huber, Chairman of the Lancaster County Commissioners, commended the work of the Manor Township Board of Supervisors to seek waivers to accommodate the special circumstances presented by this site. And Huber challenged other county government officials to encourage developers to take this direction.

"These people are pioneers. Very few have done this in the past. This is an example of responsible, creative land use. Farmlands need not be developed. Preserving farmland should be the top priority of Lancaster County government. And we should encourage developers to do the same," said Huber.

Forest Homes Systems, Inc. of Selinsgrove is building 65 town-

houses and a split-level home on the site. The model home should be open to the public before the new year. E. B. Able Construction Company of Centerville have begun work on the site.

Although the difficult construction issues inherent in this site propose a greater input in dollars and time, according to Craig L. Van Kouwenberg, Director of Marketing for the developer, the company is banking on the Lancaster Countians commitment to the preservation of farmland.

Van Kouwenberg said that this is the company's first project in the county and that they want to make a good first impression. He added that they would not be making the effort if they did not think it would work.

"The site can become the most beautiful little neighborhood in Lancaster County. The very problems of construction lend such character and beauty to the site that we can have it all . . . rural atmosphere, suburban convenience, urban amenities of public water and sewer," said Van Kouwenberg.

In light of the awareness of all Lancaster Countians to preserve farmland he feels that countians will appreciate the effort his company has made.

"It is the successful marriage of two of the most prominent driving forces leading the strong, stable economic growth for which Lancaster County is famous: land development and farming," said Scott Jackson, executive vice-president of the Building Industry Association of Lancaster County.

"A new day has dawned in Lancaster County. It begins with projects such as this. It will continue as long as economic growth and expansion dictates the course for this county. It will work as long as the development interests and the interests of agriculture and all other vital elements of Lancaster's economy can work in concert to guarantee the county's rich heritage will be preserved alongside its present and future growth.



The steep slopes, a ravine and rock outcroppings may lend beauty to the homesites planned along route 999 near Millersville, but lacked beauty as tillable farmland.

## Concern For Rural Clean Water Flows As Federal Funding Ebbs

BY PAT PURCELL

AKRON — "How many years will it be before we have to pay for water?" was the question James R. McMullen of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service asked of members of the Conestoga Headwaters Project of the Rural Clean Water Program on Tuesday, as they gathered for their coordinating meeting.

The CHP is one of 20 projects throughout the nation established to gather data about a growing concern, rural water quality. The CHP is located in one of the most intensively cultivated agricultural areas in Pennsylvania. As a result, nitrates and phosphorus are the pollutants which are affecting water supplies. This project was initiated to determine the effects of farming on groundwater pollution. McMullen, Director of Conservation and Environmental Protec-

tion Division of ASCS, pointed out that groundwater contamination is surfacing in many areas of the country, not only in areas of heavy industry, but specifically in farming areas. It is of such concern nationally that Congress appropriated \$50 million in 1980 and \$20 million was added in 1981, to "develop and test means of controlling agricultural nonpoint source water pollution in rural areas".

"We must be able to show data of what is being done with programs being administered," McMullen said, "And it is very important to future funding."

McMullen praised the Conestoga Headwaters project as being one of the best projects in the country because of the multi-pollution causing materials involved.

"You are achieving results. You are reducing nitrates and pho-

sphates. In 1986 you reduced the amount of nitrates in the water by 51,000 lbs. and phosphates by 39,000 lbs. You are showing results for the money that is being spent," said McMullen.

The nutrient management program, which is administered by the Cooperative Extension Service personnel is credited with accomplishing these significant reductions.

However, additional funds are not being appropriated and the \$6 million slated for the RCWP have been cancelled.

"Just because there is no new funding in 1988 don't get discouraged. We do have some reserve money left," said McMullen.

However, with the cutback in appropriations funding will be tight and results of the present programs will be the key to future funds.



Amos Funk, President of Lancaster Co. Agricultural Preservation Board, praised developers at ground breaking ceremonies for utilizing undesirable farmland for a residential community and challenged other developers to follow this pioneering effort.

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## Drought-Relief Loans Available

The 1987 severe summer drought has had adverse affects on the crop production in the six county area serviced by the York Farm Credit Service. Farm Credit recognizes that due to the drought, many farmers will need to do additional borrowing because of reduced crop sales and additional feed purchases.

Duane G. Bosler, Executive Vice President, of the York Farm Credit Service announced that a Special Drought Loan Program with a loan rate of 7.75% will be offered for a limited time to farmers of Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, Fulton, Perry, and York Counties.

"Our Board of Directors, consisting of solely farmers, understands the strain the drought puts on farmers who are already in tough economic times. While this program is not a panacea, it is being offered in an effort to help farmers work through this situation," said Mr. Bosler.

To qualify for this program, farmers need only review the effects of the drought on their 1987 crops

and cash flow with a Farm Credit loan officer. Normal credit qualifications and repayment schedules will apply.

\$3,000,000 has been set aside for this loan program and all farmers are encouraged to apply. Loans must be opened by Decem-

ber 31, 1987.

The York Farm Credit Service presently provides over \$66 million in long term Land Bank loans to 1200 borrowers and \$35 million in short term Production Credit Association loans to 861 borrowers in South Central Pennsylvania.

## Lancaster County Holstein Assoc. Banquet

Once again it is time for the annual banquet of the Lancaster County Holstein Association. This year's banquet will be held on Thursday, November 5, at 6:45 p.m. at the new Willow Valley Conference Center, 2416 Willow Street Pike. A delicious meal of homemade Baked Ham Loaf will be followed by reports by the Treasurer, Auditor, State Director and State Office, as well as the election of new officers. We will also be hearing from our County Dairy Princess. The well known STONE MOUNTAIN QUARTET, a Christian Blue Grass group from our own Lancaster County, is

guaranteed to provide an exciting evening of entertainment.

Come join us for an evening of good food, current news from our association, fun and fellowship. Cost for the evening is \$10 and the deadline for ticket sales is Friday, Oct. 30. Contact one of the following people for tickets.

John Howard, John Brubaker, Loren Zimmerman, Donald Risser, Lowell Brubaker, Phil Crouse, Rick Hess, Roger Mills, Harold Shellenberger, Steve Hershey, Jay Landis, Robert C. Groff, Paul Welk, Lamar Witmer, Mel Eby, James G. Kreider, Elam Bollinger, Nelson Stoner, Nate Stoltzfus, Chairman.