

# Conservation Committee Discusses Reserve Program

ANNAPOLIS, Md.— A pilot program will be used in an effort to increase participation in the Conservation Reserve Program, according to Dave Mason of the U.S.D.A. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS). Mason described the program to the members of the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) at its monthly meeting October 15. Highly erodible land will be identified in Montgomery and Carroll Counties. Public information will be targeted to owners of this land in order to promote increased enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a component of the 1985 Federal Food Security Act which provides annual rental payments to farmers who agree to remove highly erodible land from production for a ten-year period. Low participation rates by farmers in the Chesapeake Bay Region

have caused state and federal agencies in Maryland to re-examine the program. Criticism of the program has focused on the low rental payments in relation to land values and lack of outreach to potential participants.

U.S.D.A.'s Soil Conservation Service and ASCS will be cooperating on this pilot project to evaluate intensive outreach targeting. Statewide outreach efforts and publicity will continue in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the 24 Soil Conservation Districts.

Program development designed to achieve the water quality objectives of the proposed Chesapeake Bay Agreement was also discussed by members of the SSCC. MDA has been working to help farmers reduce agricultural nonpoint source pollution. Possible program modifications were reviewed.

James Dunmyer, the new Director of the Water Resource Admin-

istration in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), was introduced as DNR's representative on the SSCC. Dunmyer replaces James Peck who is now an

Assistant Secretary at DNR. SSCC will meet on November 19, 1987 at the Maryland Department of Agriculture in Annapolis.

For more information contact Louise Lawrence, Maryland Department of Agriculture, at 301/841-5863.

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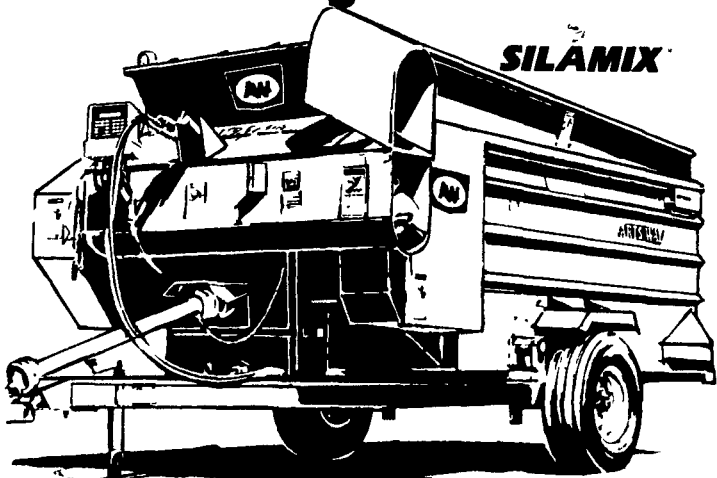
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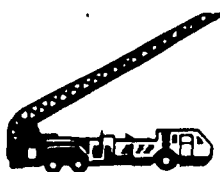
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