

Ag Industry Complex

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"The time is now" Mellott says. "With the Chesapeake Bay agreement in place, we must begin to solve our waste problem before regulation puts us out of business."

Mellott was born into a farm family that raised a 700-pound rolling herd average Jersey herd from one foundation heifer calf and won the grassland award. After he graduated from Shippensburg University, he taught physics, chemistry and math at Central Fulton High School and coached the

track team to 23 major tournament wins. One of his stars was one of the nation's fastest miler and became an all-American with full scholarship to Penn State University. In the late '70s when fuel alcohol came to the front as a substitute for the high energy costs, Mellott started a personal research study visiting alcohol plants out west and managed the building and operation of a plant in southcentral Pennsylvania. From this practical experience, Mellott concluded that an alcohol plant cannot stand alone.

The Pennsylvania Farmers' Association came to similar conclusions from their efforts to develop processing plants for farm members. Fred Kerr, in PFA's marketing division, found that lack of operating capital and long turnaround time for cash flow made profit margins small in processing plants. "We learned that unlike the popular concept the middleman doesn't make all the profits," Kerr said. "The middleman has the same type margins as the producer. We found that processing operators have difficulty standing alone, too."

Other factors also influenced the beginning of this proposed integrated, economic development system. PFA found that vehicles that haul grain from the west and cottonseed from the south must usually return empty. Excess manure, especially in southeast Pennsylvania, could be transported back on these empty vehicles if it were in a manageable form.

Mellott found that the incinerators for solid waste were considered liabilities rather than sources of energy. Waste trucked into landfills created problems of space and contaminated underground water sources.

In addition, Mellott found that agriculture was the major remaining large industry in Pennsylvania. The coal and steel industries are hurting. And Pennsylvania agriculture will fade away, too, if plans are not made for long-term growth, according to Mellott.

"We want to use the large population centers in Pennsylvania as a resource to agriculture," Mellott said. "These people provide a lot of garbage that can form the basis of energy for the complex and then

provide close markets for the products produced by the agricultural synergism." After the glass and metals are separated at curbside before pickup, the burnables would be taken to the complex to produce steam. This steam would produce heat and electricity for the complex. From this power source the most economical products could be produced.

These products would be determined by the market (what the consumer wants) and by the location of the plant. For example, per capita consumption of mozzarella cheese has been increasing. A lot of heat is needed to produce this cheese and the whey by-product often causes problems as a waste product. With energy to burn from the city's waste, the complex would have the resource to make the cheese and turn the whey into fuel alcohol.

Other products that could be turned into alcohol in the complex would be potatoes and grains. The byproduct from the production of alcohol is animal feed--distillers grain and sweet stillage water that is 90 percent digestible. But an even better market for these high-protein feeds is the small pet food market. Canned pet food has 65 to 78 percent moisture and could be readily processed in the proposed complex. Add a meatpacking plant to the complex and you could have meat scraps to mix in with the distillers grains.

Excess heat could warm a greenhouse and carbon dioxide could help the plants grow. The manure from a feedlot could be used to produce methane. Manure

from neighboring farms could be piped into the complex. The methane would provide additional energy to dry manure to be compressed into bales of pellets. The bales of manure could be transported to the southern cottonfields or the reclaimed strip mines of western Pennsylvania. The pellets could be bagged for use on lawns and gardens, back where the original garbage came from.

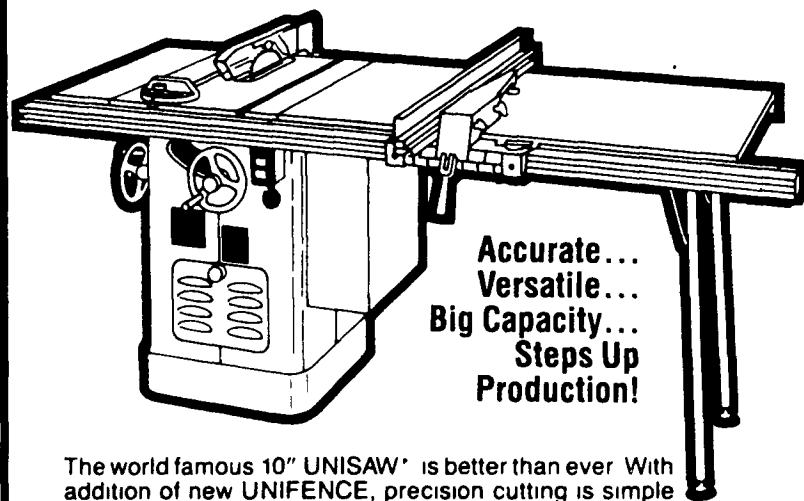
A fertilizer plant, a cannery, a commercial fish operation, a mill to produce cereals or a plant to produce fructose sugar for the soda industry would all have a likely place in this integrated complex. Vegetables and cut flowers could also be produced and kiln-dried lumber would keep the furniture manufacturing business in Pennsylvania.

Right now a corp group of individuals is acting as the catalyst to bring together funds for the feasibility study. "We need to get started now," Mellott said. "We are being overrun by our own garbage. And we have a situation where regulations may force things upon agriculture that could change the whole economy of Pennsylvania."

"Like my former track-star, agriculture is Pennsylvania's star economic player. I want to build on that star and create an economic winner based on agriculture that reaches out to benefit all segments of people in Pennsylvania. With food and products economically produced close to home, jobs are created. And new and revitalized businesses can grow because they have their roots in this kind of a complex," Mellott said.



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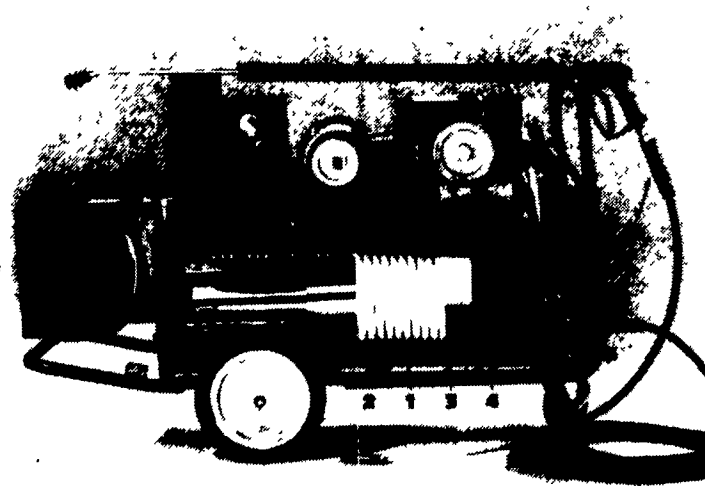
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