

Swine Management News

BY

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The other day, I was reading through a copy of the National Hog Farmer and discovered an article regarding nuisance suits. I couldn't help but feel sorry for both sides. No, I'm not turning into an anti-hog person. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The fact is that hog producers are threatened with law suits and in some cases are actually shut down because of odor problems. On the other hand the people who are subjected to the odors and file the suits really don't know anything about agriculture and can't be totally blamed for their ignorance of rural life.

I can't help but wonder what is going to happen to Delmarva. Recently, in traveling around the peninsula, I've been amazed with the large amount of development that is ongoing. Unfortunately, many of the individuals who are

doing the building, or will eventually purchase the homes are unfamiliar with agriculture. They don't bother to check out the area prior to purchasing a home in the country and become surprised when they get their first whiff of hog odor.

Now you and I have become accustomed to the smell of pig and, due to regular acclimation, have become desensitized to it. Newcomers don't get used to agricultural odors and for that reason must be warned prior to purchasing their homes.

Real estate agents may not bother to tell prospective buyers that the home they are considering is located within nose-shot of a hog or other livestock operation. Then when the first load of manure is spread upon the ground, tempers flair and phones ring.

How can you protect yourself? While there is no absolute way of avoiding a nuisance complaint, there are several things you can do to help avoid a major problem.

First and foremost, avoid spreading manure during the evenings or weekends and especially on holidays. Why purposely cause a problem by spreading manure when your neighbors will be outdoors to smell the process?

Second, try at all costs to avoid selling road frontage lots that will only put possible complainers within reach of your operation. It really disturbs me to find out that some farmers who are having problems with nuisance complaints actually caused the problems themselves by selling lots near their operations or, worse yet, by locating their operations near their neighbors homes. Remember, even your fellow farmers might not like to be on the receiving end of hog odors.

Third, when it comes to controlling odors and manure management and storage, follow the guidelines that are recommended by your state Department of Natural Resources and Cooperative Extension System.

We may tend to think that just because we were in a location first, we are protected from lawsuits. But, if we stretch the laws and try to get away with not following state regulations, it may come back to haunt us.

It seems to me that it would be a good idea if city folk who decide to move to the country were told of any animal production units that are in the area of their prospective home. As an additional precaution, they might even want to drive up to the farm and get a close inspection of how the unit smells so that they know what to expect. If they still decide to purchase the home and move into the country, then they had fair warning of real country living.

The same should hold true with pesticide use. Since many homes are located along the road frontage of farmland, those home owners should be aware that pesticides are routinely sprayed on agricultural

land to combat weeds, insects and disease organisms.

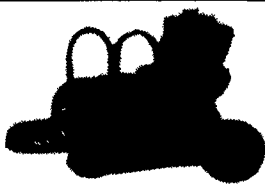
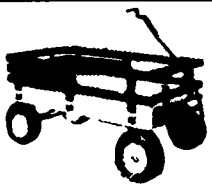
The end result of all this would be that farmland would be developed in tracts of whole farms instead of roadside lots haphazardly located throughout the countryside.

The farmland on Delmarva is not inexhaustible. Plans need to be made to insure that if the suburban sprawl is to continue, it be done in a way to minimize conflict between the existing farmers and the newcomers. Most farmers don't want to lose their right to sell their property to developers. Many are actually counting on that as their source of retirement income. We must however, see to it that the future of those farmers remaining on Delmarva be protected against uninformed, sensitive city folk who may find that country living ain't all it's cracked up to be.



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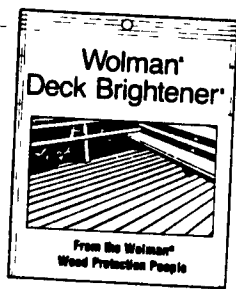
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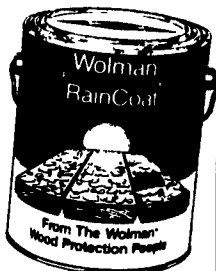


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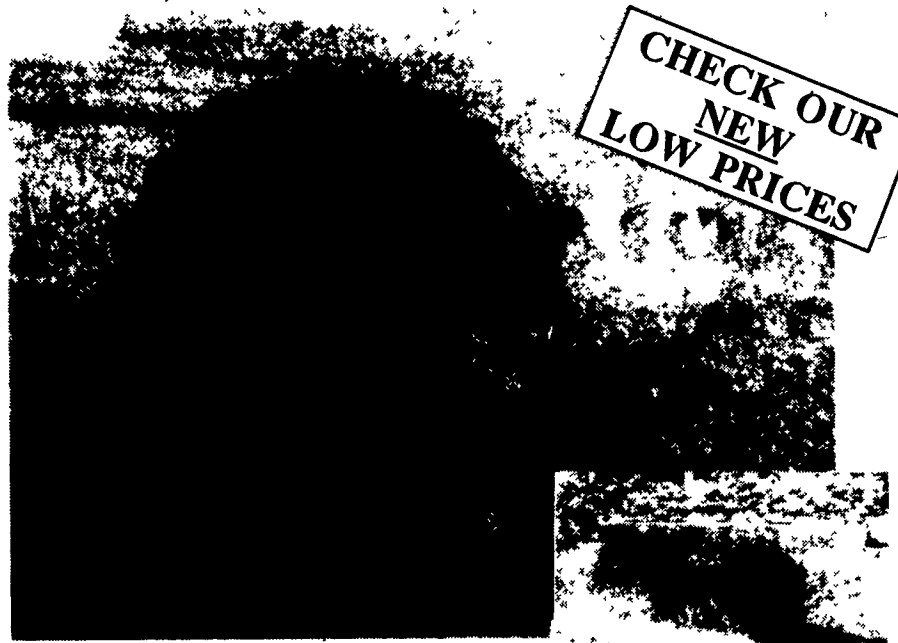
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