

# Lancaster Chamber OK's Ag Coordinator Position

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry announced the approval of an ag coordinator position on Thursday.

The funding and creation of this new position is being recommended by the Chamber's Agriculture Committee to assist farmers and maintain the economic vitality created by Lancaster's blend of agriculture, industry and tourism.

The committee has long felt that the best, most practical way to preserve farmland is to make farming a more economically

viable use of open space. The ag coordinator's mission will be to enhance the economic welfare of farmers in Lancaster County, and thereby provide spin-off benefits to the county's entire agricultural-related business community.

The ag coordinator will be responsible for identifying the needs of Lancaster County's agriculture and agri-business; developing recommendations for dealing with challenges to the agriculture industry; and coordinating and working with all ag development and ag-related businesses and agencies within the county; seeking available local, state and

federal funding for the development, marketing and promotion of agriculture; developing a working relationship with area farmers; and acting as a liaison to agricultural agencies and legislators.

Envisioned as a three-year pilot program, the ag coordinator will be under the supervision of the Chamber's vice president and director of economic development, and will serve as a focal point for much of Lancaster County's agriculture activity.

According to the committee, Lancaster County is the most productive non-irrigated farming county in the United States, and is surpassed by only ten irrigated counties. If the county's more than 5,000 farms were combined into one corporation, the business would rank in the Fortune 500, with sales of \$700 million.

Agriculture is just as important to Lancaster County's economy as manufacturing and tourism, according to the committee. The

loss of farmland in Lancaster County during the past decade has raised some serious concerns about the effect this loss might be having on the community's economy and quality of life.

Participants in the news conference to announce the approval of an ag coordinator position were William F. Bash, Chamber chairman; Kenneth M. Rutt, chairman, Agriculture Committee; and Jay W. Irwin, director, Lancaster County Extension Service.

## PFA Opposes Backhauling

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — The Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA) has voiced strong support for legislation recently introduced in Congress to ban backhauling of chemicals and garbage in trucks used to transport food.

Calling it a "dangerous and distasteful, and unfortunately, legal" practice, PFA president Keith Eckel of Clarks Summit, Lackawanna County, urged passage of H.R. 3386. The bill, introduced by Rep. William Clinger (R -- 23rd Dist.), would make it a crime to use refrigerated food trucks to backhaul municipal solid waste or other forms of garbage. The bill would also ban the use of tank trucks for hauling liquid food such as fruit juice, cooking oil, wine and spirits, and chemicals that are

dangerous to humans in the same truck.

In addition, H.R. 3386 calls for an in-depth study of garbage backhauling in dry or non-food trucks and outlines criminal penalties for anyone violating the act. Backhauling garbage began several years ago as eastern landfills reached capacity and cities such as New York had to look west for places to dispose of their refuse. Certain truckers hauling food began to return west with loads of garbage bound for landfills rather than return home empty.

In a letter to Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation, PFA president Eckel said, "At a time when public awareness of food safety is great, no delays in passage and implementation of this legislation can be justified."

**IF THE SOIL LIFE WAS NOT  
KILLED WITH CHEMICALS,  
THEN THE MANURE WOULD  
QUICKLY DECOMPOSE,  
TURN BACK TO EARTH,  
AND WOULD NOT POLLUTE  
THE WATERS.**

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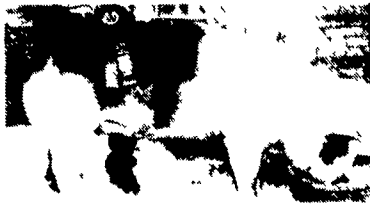
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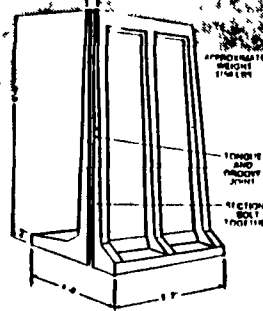


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