

# County Ag Coordinator

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tural economic development and relationships between agriculture and other industries in the county.

"In the past," Rutt said, "Lancaster residents have always been proud of the fact that the county's three-pronged economy--manufacturing, agriculture and tourism--has kept our area strong. The careful balance of our economy has made the county virtually recession-proof and, as such, the envy of many communities. Much of that recession-proof balance is due to our strong agricultural sector."

Rutt said that if the county's 5,080 farms were combined into one corporation, the business would rank in the Fortune 500 with sales of more than \$700 million. But the problem has been the potential loss of economic balance, specifically the loss of prime farmland as it relates to both economic and quality of life issues within the county.

"We perceive that a lot of other companies' waste products are in fact an ingredient for agriculture," Rutt said. "For example, newspapers are being recycled for animal bedding. And organic waste is not going to be accepted into landfills

but can be recycled back to agriculture to enhance the fertility of the land."

Thomas Baldrige, managing director of the Chamber, said the ag coordinator position will fall within the economic development department. He said that the support of the ag coordinator reflected the chamber's recognition of agriculture as a major part of the county's economic development.

County Agent Jay Irwin, said the service had supported the idea of a county ag coordinator from the beginning and said the person in this position will be able to implement educational information available from the extension service.

"Anything that helps the farmer helps the whole county," Irwin said.

Rutt concurred. "We feel the best way to preserve farms is to make farming profitable," Rutt said. "A lot of farmers do not want to give up their land for other uses if they can make a profit. That's what we are in business for, and most of us like what we are doing. We'll continue to farm as long as it's profitable."

The Chamber's ag committee undertook the creation of this new

county position in November of 1989. Now the funding for the innovative program has been secured from the county, the agribusiness community and other private-sector companies. Resumes are now being accepted for the position.

The position of ag coordinator will be established as a three-year pilot program under the aegis of the Chamber's vice president and director of economic development. The ag committee will have direct responsibility for the direction of the program.

The sponsoring organizations have pledged funding on the basis of the program's intention to seek viable methods for maintaining the county's enviable balance of manufacturing, agriculture and tour-

ism. Sponsors include: Armstrong World Industries, Inc.; Pennfield Corporation; Wenger Feed Mill, Inc.; Pioneer Seed Co.; Purina Mills, Inc.; Farm & Home Foundation; Monsanto; Lancaster Leaf Tobacco Co., Inc.; Agway Farm and Home Stores.

Also, Hamilton Bank; Meridian Bank; Farmers First Bank; Commonwealth National Bank; Bank of Lancaster County; Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.; Lancaster Farming; Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau; Penn Jersey Products, Inc./Harvestore; Hess Mills; Dow Chemical and American Cyanamid.

"Although additional sources are being sought," Baldrige said,

"funding has progressed sufficiently to allow us to begin an active employment search."

Baldrige said a major requirement of this position will be a broad-based knowledge of the total and complex agricultural industry. The entire chain from producer to processor to distributor to wholesaler to retailer to consumer with all of its related challenges, will be encompassed in this job description.

Interested applicants should send their resume to Baldrige at The Chamber. A target date of April 1 for filling the position has been set. Additional companies or individuals who would like to contribute to the program should also contact the chamber.

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## SILO GUARD MEETING



WHEN - Tues., Feb. 20

WHERE - Bonanza Steak House, Ephrata

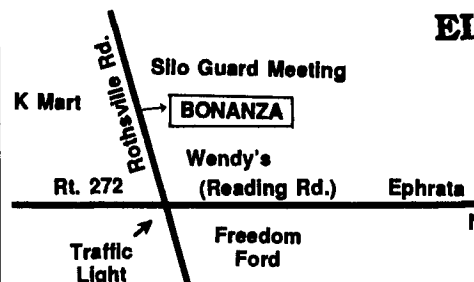
TIME - 9:00 AM, registration, coffee, doughnuts

meeting starts at 9:30 sharp

FREE LUNCH-12:00 noon

ADJOURN-2:00 PM

MAIN SPEAKER - Marshall McCullough

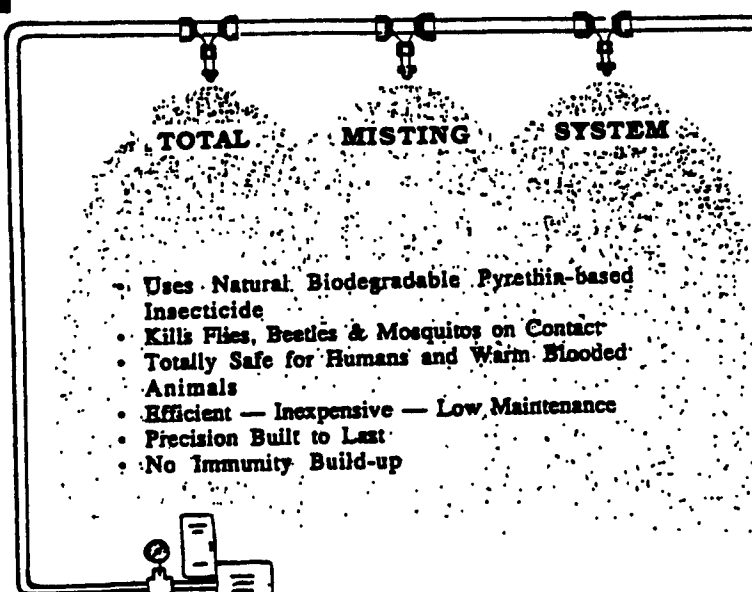


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