

Swine Info Meetings Keep 'Lines Open'

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The first major regional swine informational meeting was held in my area recently.

Despite some minor reservations in planning the event, it was a success. One of the interesting things about putting together educational meetings is that the planners need input on what the educational content of the meeting should be.

An extension agent or specialist can only guess at what producers would like to hear. The true value of a meeting is measured by the number of producers that attend and the amount of usable information producers take away.

Ultimately, we want producers to go home with ideas they can put into practice in their operations. So the real success or failure of an event like this can't be measured immediately.

Feedback on Meetings

Extension personnel want feedback on meetings from producers. Producers need to feel free to talk to their extension representatives to make certain that future meet-

ings are planned around topics that are pertinent to them and their operations. What type of programs would you like to have in the future? What topics would you like to hear discussed?

As times change, so do the needs of the hog industry. That's one of the reasons why so many people at our regional meeting stayed to hear the final presentation on the Hatfield Lean Payment Program. Let's face it, lean payment programs will eventually affect everyone in the hog business.

New and innovative programs, management techniques, and products will always be of interest to the majority of pork producers who attend meetings. After all, in order to remain competitive in today's market, you need to take advantage of new technologies that fit into your management program. Where the snag comes in is when it's time to repeat a program that may not be getting the attention it deserves. For that reason, it's important that you make yourself heard when you meet your extension agent.

If you have a problem on your

farm, your extension agent can provide you with suggestions for improvement or consult with a specialist who can give that assistance. If you would like to see a program designed around a particular topic or issue, don't keep quiet about it. Make your needs known.

Information Networking

Information and information networking can help keep the hog industry competitive. Extension agents and specialists are not mind readers. On those occasions when we've had to guess what you want to hear, it's hit or miss. With your input, the result can always be a direct hit.

The success of education meetings depends upon open lines of communication between producers and those who provide educational programs to producers. We not only want to hear from you, we need to hear you. Sometimes negative comments are more important than positive because they indicate we missed the mark.

Let your extension agents know how you feel about the program of any other meeting you have attended recently. Having worked

in extension for five years, I can't tell you how many times I assisted with a program and never had feedback, good or bad, about the event. This just leaves a big question mark as to whether the meeting was interesting and useful.

So every time you see your extension agents, let them know about meetings you find interest-

ing and helpful and those which had nothing to offer. We need your input if we are going to meet your needs.

I've heard it said that we are in the Communication Age. Let's make every effort to keep the lines of communication open and our swine informational meetings relevant.

Easements Gain Strength

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee has approved legislation to strengthen the legal validity of conservation and preservation easements -- contracts that are frequently used to protect natural, historic, and scenic resources from destruction and development.

The bill's prime sponsor is state Rep. Samuel Morris, who is chairman of the committee and a leading legislative advocate on behalf of conservation.

Morris, a Chester County Democrat, says he has worked with conservation organizations over much of the past year to develop the legislation because

Pennsylvania has no statute that applies to the work conservancy groups are doing in this legal area.

Easements are acquired by conservation groups interested in the preservation of a property because of its unique natural, historic, or recreational value. The easements become part of the title to the property and are binding on subsequent owners.

Morris said the bill is supported by local, state, and national conservation groups, including The French and Pickering Creek Conservancy Trust, The Brandywine Conservancy, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Open Land Conservancy of Chester County, Berks County Conservancy.


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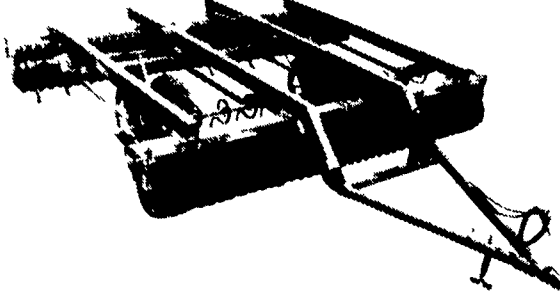


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