

Farmland Preservation Program Gets Last Minute Reprieve

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toxic wastes that may be illegally dumped on the land (governing bodies are now considered only easement holders and take on no additional liability interest in the land).

Miller said a York County commissioner had pushed for the extension because that county — still without an approved plan for

purchasing easements, but granted state funding based on local funds raised — faced losing its state aid.

"It takes pressure off the counties, other than Lancaster County — which was the only one up and running — Lancaster County had a start and has been out front in leading this program statewide," Miller said.

The reactivated board approved

a number of items Wednesday.

According to Barry Frantz, a soil conservationist and staff member on the state Bureau of Farmland Protection, Montgomery County became the sixth county to receive approval of its easement purchasing plan.

Other counties already set up to purchase such easements include Berks, Bucks, Chester, Lancaster

and Lehigh counties.

Montgomery has put up local money in past two years and received allocations enabling the county officials to spend almost \$4 million to secure farmland development rights.

Frantz said that in 1989, Montgomery put up \$400,000 and received an additional \$1,661,106 in state funds. In 1990, the southeastern county set aside \$200,000 more of its own money and received an additional \$1,310,417 in state matching and grant funds.

According to Frantz, the approved Montgomery County plan is unique, but that each county plan is different in some respects.

"None of the programs have been like the others," Frantz said. "I think it (Montgomery County's plan) follows a similar tact of Berks, Bucks and Lehigh in that it is targeting more rural areas."

He explained that the Lancaster County plan is targeted at getting development rights on farms at the edge of urban spread.

In other action, Frantz said the board on Wednesday approved some minor changes to the Berks County program.

"They changed some of the factors in farm evaluation systems, basically taking a five-mile radius, lowering it to two miles," he said. "Also in Berks County, in determining appraisal, they will not be considering zoning classification."

"The last one (change to Berks County program), when surveying a property that is to be in the program, if a survey is required by the county, but partially to the benefit of the landowner, the cost of doing the survey would be pro-rated, according to the ratio of benefits

derived," Frantz said.

In Lancaster County, the board Wednesday approved spending additional funds toward additional costs for legal fees, recording fees and title insurance on four farms which already had closing down on the easements.

The additional funds amounted to less than \$1,500 per farm, according to Frantz.

The board also approved the purchase of the 221-acre Harold Trimble family farm in Drumore Township for an approved easement price of \$162,000.

Frantz said the farm was described as being a 161-herd dairy operation.

He said that although Lancasterians have previously undergone purchasing of development easements without state help, the Trimble farm has become the largest and sixth farm to have been purchased by the leading county with the help of state money.

The county has contributed \$40,500 toward the purchase of the Trimble farm, Frantz said. The remainder comes from state funds.

In other action, the board set tentative dates for future meetings, most likely meeting at Ag Progress Days in mid-August.



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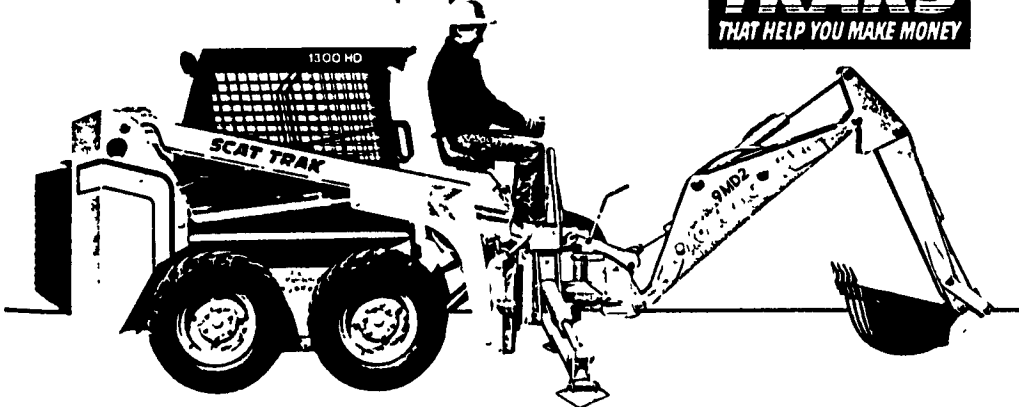
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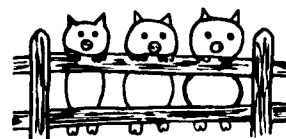
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