

# Ag Progress Days

# SPECIAL REPORT

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**  
**George Hurd**  
 Environmental/Resource Development Agent

The theme for this year's Ag Progress Days is "Food and Environmental Quality." The theme reflects the growing importance being placed on environmental awareness.

Several of the planned Ag Progress Days demonstrations deal with current environmental issues facing Pennsylvanians. These demonstrations tie in directly with educational programming being done at the county level by extension agents.

A major demonstration planned for Ag Progress Days is on recycling. Mandatory curbside recycling will begin this fall for many municipalities in Pennsylvania. One of the goals set forth by the State is that at least 25 percent of all municipal waste and source separated recyclable materials generated in Pennsylvania should be recycled.

The increasing problem with disposal of all types of waste is a major reason for setting this goal. An educational display at Ag Prog-

ress Days will explain these issues and how they relate to recycling.

Recycling education at the local level is being done by extension agents. A major educational effort by agents has been on using newspaper for livestock bedding.

There is a problem statewide with marketing recycled news-

print. Using shredded newsprint for livestock bedding is a viable alternative that would prevent a substantial amount of this material from being landfilled. Agents have organized meetings and equipment demonstrations statewide to provide information on this practice.

Research is being conducted at Penn State University on using newsprint for livestock bedding and there will be an equipment demonstration at Ag Progress Days. The demonstration will show various types of equipment that can be used for shredding paper and blowing it into stalls.

Another demonstration at Ag Progress Days will be on composting. Starting in September, the state will no longer allow landfills to accept truckloads comprised primarily of leafwaste. Municipalities will have to find alternative

methods for leafwaste disposal. One method is composting. Leafwaste composting can be done at a centralized municipally run facility and in backyards by homeowners. If properly managed, composting yardwaste is a safe practice that can produce a useful material and help reduce the amount of waste going into landfills. The Ag Progress Days demonstration will focus on methods for backyard composting.

At the local level, extension agents primarily through the "Master Gardener Program" have been educating individuals on backyard composting. Educational programs will be expanding to provide information to homeowners on lawn care.

An important issue here concerns homeowners bagging their grass clippings. Waste composi-

tion studies have shown that between March and September, the volume of residential solid waste in many areas increases 20 to 50 percent because of grass clippings. Grass clippings do not have to enter the waste stream and in most instances should remain on the lawn. Material that is collected can be composted. Information on lawn care maintenance that would help reduce this problem is being provided by extension agents.

These demonstrations at Ag Progress Days reflect research being conducted at Penn State and educational programming being done by extension agents on environmental issues. An emphasis has been placed on developing practical and safe alternatives that will help lessen the waste disposal problems faced by Pennsylvanians.

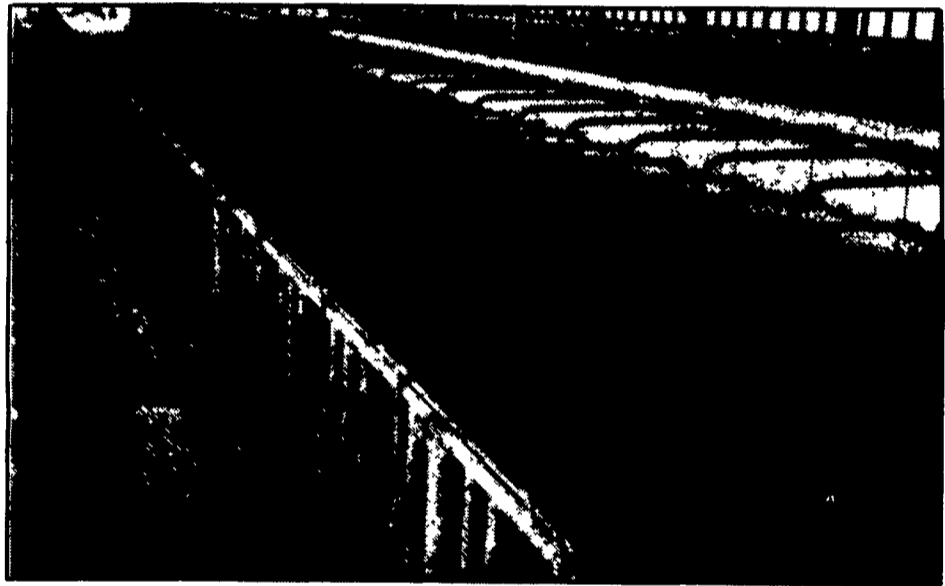
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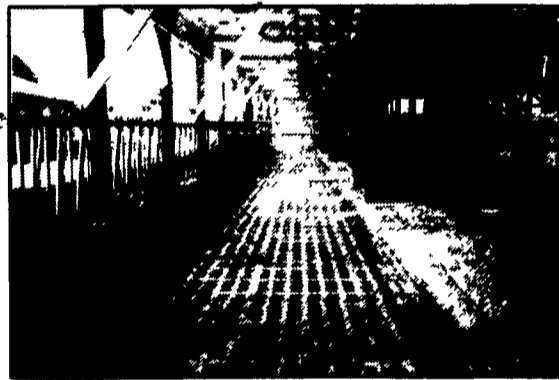
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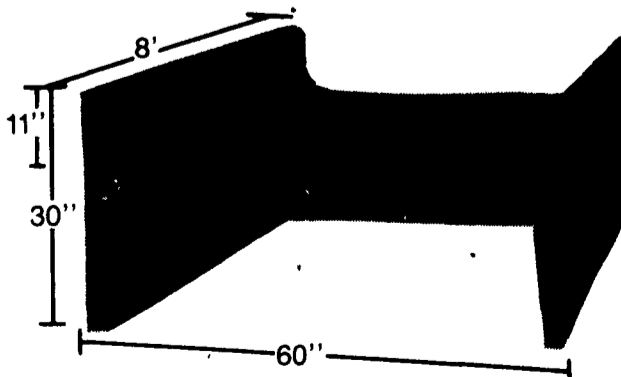


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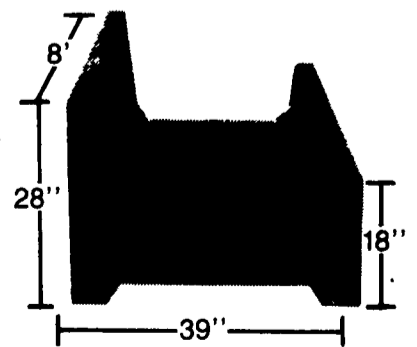
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