

PFA Says Wetland Proposals Fail To Protect Landowners

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Regulatory proposals to expand control of the state's wetlands by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) fail to protect the rights of private landowners, according to testimony presented here today by a spokesman for the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA). A series of hearings are being held on the proposed DER regulations. Audrey Rodgers, owner and operator of a dairy farm in Mifflin County, told the Environmental Quality Board that "in our rush to correct what many perceive as 'past sins' relating to wetlands use, the rights of property owners must not be ignored or sacrificed."

She explained that farmers "are not opposed to protecting wetlands" because they understand the environment must be protected. "But farmers also know that they must use their land to its maximum economic potential if they want to remain in farming," she testified.

The proposed regulations have the potential to prevent farmers from farming, according to her testimony. Earlier in her testimony she said that farmers have found it impossible to clean ditches in their fields because they are now a "protected" resource. Another farmer needs an engineering study to build a farm pond, while others find it impossible to build farm ponds.

"Wetlands were altered for purposes that provided many benefits to society, including flood control, protection of public health, agricultural production, road construction and residential development," Rodgers stated. It's a

rather recent development to recognize wetlands as a "public" resource to be protected."

She pointed to several concerns relating to the proposed regulations.

"The department's current and proposed regulations place many obligations on individuals submitting a permit application, but the department is under no obligation to render a timely permit decision," she stated. "Waiting a year or more for a permit decision" is unacceptable. "Clearly the permitting process must be accelerated."

"The department," according to Rodgers, "contends that it has the authority to regulate any activity in a wetland — no matter the size. Unlike the Corps of Engineers, DER has chosen not to utilize general permits to exempt minor projects from the permitting treadmill." She recommended that the department "should develop a minimum acreage standard for its regulations."

One of the proposed regulations [Sec. 105.15 (B) (2)] would require "an environmental assessment for those activities receiving a permit waiver," Rodgers stated. "Waived activities should be exempted from this assessment."

She testified that all "existing field drainage systems" should be accepted. Also farms with conservation plans, she testified, should be the only requirement for farms to satisfy regulatory demands of DER.

Permit waivers should be granted farmers for other important agricultural projects including construction and maintenance of farm ponds and drainage ditches or field drainage systems, and

removal of water obstructions or encroachments to activate tradi-

tional farmland.

PFA is a general farm organiza-

tion with 23,000-plus family members in Pennsylvania.



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FICTION: The Stronger the Chain the Longer it will Last...

FACT 1. The life of barn cleaner chain is not directly affected by its tensile strength. The strength of a new chain considerably exceeds the maximum pull of the drive unit. For example, the pull of a J-Star model 750 drive unit - the heaviest and fastest drive on the market - is only 33% of the tensile strength of J-Star's hook link chain. Enough said!!!

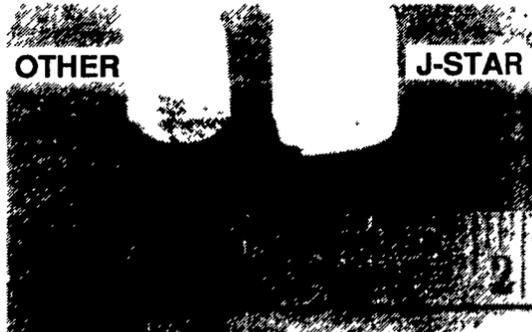
FICTION: All Hook Link Chain is Basically Alike...

FACT 2. The life of barn cleaner chain, for a given installation, is affected by its wear area and hardness. The greater the wear area, and/or the harder the wearing surface, the longer a link will wear before it ultimately pulls apart. Now, how does J-Star chain stack up?

* J-Star chain is hardened by the same process to the same hardness range as all competitive hook link chain — **NO DIFFERENCE HERE!**

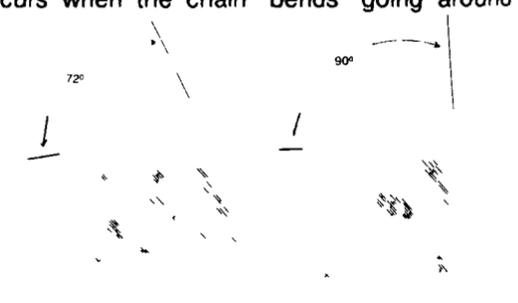
BUT...

* The first point in a chain to fail from wear is usually the end of the eye. J-Star chain, as compared to the other brand for example, has 35% more area in the hook link eye. Note the graphic difference shown below.



FICTION: The Life of a Barn Cleaner Chain has Nothing to do with the Kind of Drive Unit Used With It...

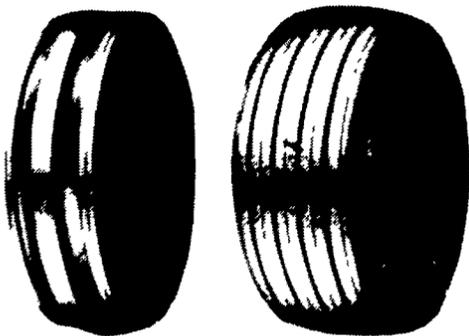
FACT 3. A chain wears at the point where the links contact one another. The rate of wear for a given installation increases as the amount of "grinding" between hook and mating eye increases. This "grinding" occurs when the chain "bends" going around corners, such as corner wheels, reverse curves, hold-down shoes or wheels, and around drive sprockets. Most competitive barn cleaners are about equal in the degree to which they "bend" the chain going through most of these points. **HOWEVER** - hook link chain does "grind" less when it goes around the J-Star 5-tooth drive sprocket than when it goes around the other brand 4-tooth sprocket.



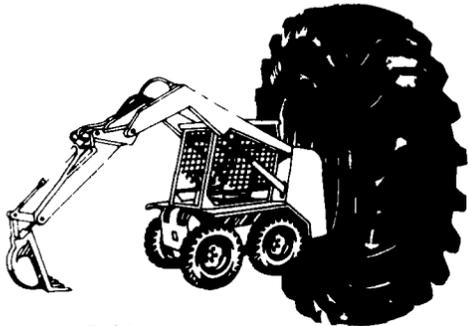
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