

What Do Runoff, Erosion Cost?

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Water running off from agricultural lands causes many problems. Mark Shaw, Penn State agricultural engineer, points out that one set of problems affects the productivity and profitability of farming.

•Water that runs off is not available to the crop. In many cases, that summer thunderstorm that caused heavy runoff from the fields could have helped the crop through a subsequent dry spell if it had been stored in the soil.

•Water running from field carries nutrients from either manure or commercial fertilizer. This results in a loss to the crop, and a wasted investment by the farmer.

•Runoff water removes soil from fields. Gully erosion is obvious and causes concern, but most soil loss is in the form of sheet erosion which is hardly visible or rill erosion which can be seen but is filled in by the next normal tillage operation. Sheet and rill erosion remove enough soil to reduce the productive capacity of a high percentage of our agricultural land.

Shaw lists another set of problems which affects people downstream, causing environmental damage.

•Water which runs off a field contributes to flooding downstream.

•Plant nutrients which wash off from fields change the chemical balance of the receiving waters and affect plant and animal growth. Recent concern about the Chesapeake Bay is only one example of environmental effects.

•Soil which is deposited in streams results in muddy water and clogged stream channels which affect fish and increase the danger of flooding.

The amount of runoff is affected by rainfall which we can do little to control. It is also affected by soil type and land slopes. While we cannot change these factors, we can control erosion by using easily erodible soils and steeply sloping land for hay and pasture rather than row crops.

The other factors which affect runoff and erosion, over which farmers do have control, are tillage, cropping patterns, and conservation practices. Reduced tillage and no-till can, with good manage-

ment, reduce both erosion and production costs, resulting in reduced environmental damage and higher economic returns to the farmer. Contouring, strip cropping, and terracing also reduce runoff and erosion.

The public demand for better conservation of our soil and water resources should not be seen as a threat to agriculture, but rather a reminder of the need to farm in ways which will benefit both farmers and society as a whole.

Egg Producers To Vote On Marketing Program

Pennsylvania egg producers will vote on a proposal to establish a marketing program, State Agriculture Secretary Boyd E. Wolff announced recently. The Department of Agriculture has mailed ballots and copies of the proposed program to approximately 120 egg producers who own 30,000 or more laying hens.

The proposal would establish a checkoff system of contributions from egg producers to fund marketing, research, educational, and promotional activities. Producers would contribute 2.5 cents for each 30 dozen cases sold. Approximately \$360,000 would be raised annually to fund the program. The program would be directed by a marketing board composed of egg producers.

For the measure to pass, a simple majority of the producers, in numbers and volume of production, must support the proposal.

Wolff said the referendum is the result of input offered by producers at hearings in June. It will mark the first time that Pennsylvania egg producers have voted on a state marketing program.

Producers who fail to receive a ballot and a copy of the proposal may call the department's toll-free number, 1-800-AG-PENNA. The material is also available from Room 303, Bureau of Market Development, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, 2301 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17710-9408.

Allentown Fair Entries

Beef cattle, dairy cattle, dairy goats, sheep and swine entries for the 1990 Allentown Fair will be

accepted between Monday, July 23 and Friday, August 10. All other entries will be made at Ag Hall between Friday, July 27 and

Saturday, August 11 at 1 p.m. Premium lists with entry forms may be obtained from the fair office, (215) 433-7541. The office is be-

hind the Ritz Restaurant at the fairgrounds, 17th and Chew streets, Allentown.

Cumberland Has 4-H Roundup

CARLISLE (Cumberland Co.) — The grand champion market hog of the 1990 Cumberland County 4-H swine roundup sold for \$3.40 per pound at the annual sale August 14 at the Carlisle Livestock Market. Chris Weber, Mechanicsburg sold his

240-pound champion to The Country Butcher Shop.

Hatfield Quality Meats purchased Bill Leib's 230-pound reserve champion for \$2.05 per pound.

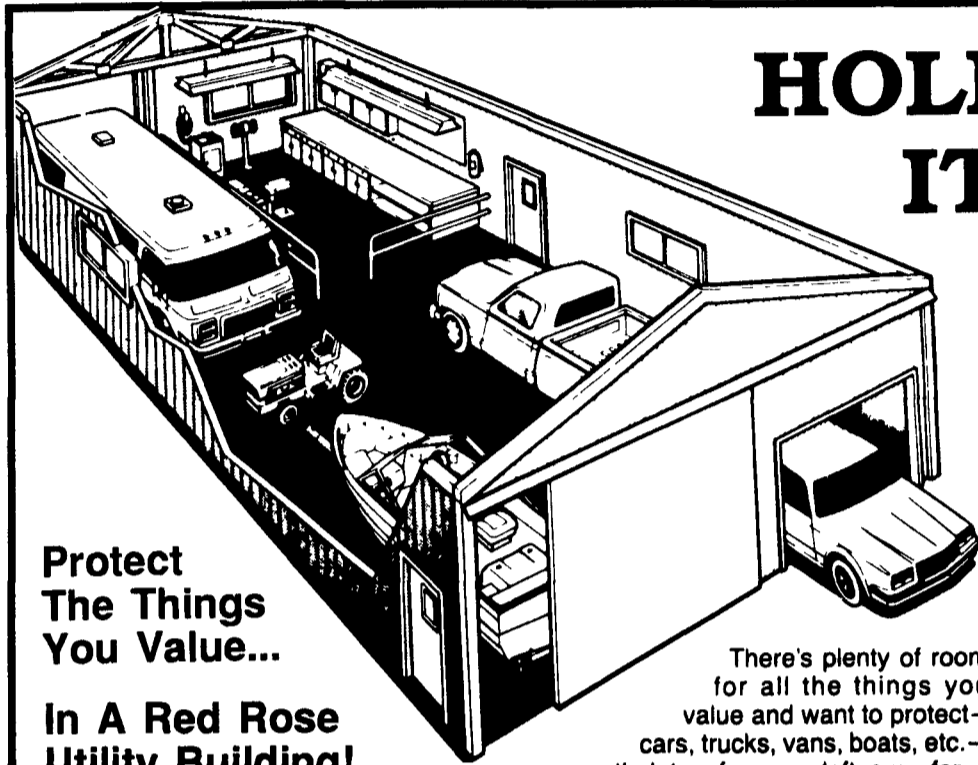
Kasi Sheaffer sold her champion pen of two to Okeechobee

Livestock for \$2.00 per pound. Other winners included:

Champion Fitter Junior - Michelle Cornman; Intermediate - Clinton Barrick, Senior Sarah Garman.

Champion Lightweight - Heather Garman; Champion Mediumweight - Bill Leib, Champion Heavyweight - Chris Weber, Reserve Champion Pen - Chad Rubin.

The judge for the roundup was Jim Parlett, York County



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