

York Farmland Trust Formed

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"When did you last hear a comment such as 'we've traveled throughout this great country. It's awe-inspiring but there's no place more beautiful or better to live than York County'?" Brown says in a recent membership-drive letter sent in an initial mailing to 2500 potential members. "Some

of the very reasons we chose to live in York County are fast eroding. We can no longer afford to take our abundance for granted."

Brown credits a handful of key local business leaders for "getting this rolling," inspired in part by the formation of a National Farmland Trust and successful prog-

rams in nearby counties like Lancaster and Berks. The seventeen-member volunteer board of local ag and industry leaders is presently working on a budget and plans to hire an executive director to handle administrative details.

"Our aim is to offer alternatives, such as the purchase of the development easements or a vehicle for individuals who might wish to donate their easements to keep the land in agriculture," Brown explains. "By working through a private, non-profit entity, it can be handled in many legal ways. Thrust of the committee is to look at the county's farmland areas for the most ideal locations to preserve prime, contiguous acreage. We can't go at it in a hodge-podge manner."

Land on which development

easements would be acquired by the trust would carry perpetual deed restrictions against conversion to non-agriculture uses.

While economic slowdown has hit hard in some parts of the Northeast, Brown believes the stable base of agriculture in York County provides a cushioning effect against other economic factors.

"Agriculture isn't great but it is hanging in there," he adds. "That helps the whole local economy as farmers buy and sell goods."

While the county has seen rapid development in recent years, agriculture remains the most important economic activity, with York ranking seventh in total ag output of the state's 67 counties. One out of every 13 jobs in York is attributable, directly or indirectly, to agriculture. Agricultural output

for the county in 1987 was \$107 million, in turning generating over \$1 billion worth of economy activity.

Airville farmer and Trust board member Pat Sueck sees the private organization as complementing state preservation programs recently implemented.

"But by not meeting specific criteria under the state program, a lot of areas where there is interest in saving the land for agriculture might instead be lost to development. A private trust can take up that slack," she believes. "The approach to this must be very farsighted. Too often we react, rather than act. This is a classic opportunity to be foresighted."

Reed J. "Jack" Dunn is director of the York County Planning Commission and a member of the

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Dairyman's Herd

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"The cows stay cleaner and it's easier to give them individual feeding," he said.

Three silos handle the high moisture corn, haylage and corn silage that Dunn feeds to his cows.

He tried bagging, but turned away from it.

"With the silos, you have a fresh the diversified business demands them to do so.

James said his grandfather, Robert G. Dunn, now retired, had an agricultural survival rule — stay diversified.

"If one thing isn't doing well, the other thing will pull you through," Dunn said.

Therefore Dunn Farms Inc. came to be and James Dunn has become, unofficially of course, vice president in charge of milk production.

James Dunn said that perhaps others with the same type of dairy farming background could be as successful as he has been.

"I think so, but probably not as fast. I have had quite a bit of help," he said.

Success, according to Dunn, all comes down to one thing — "desire."

Dave Somers, DHIA supervisor for Schuylkill County, said the younger Dunn will most likely continue to succeed.

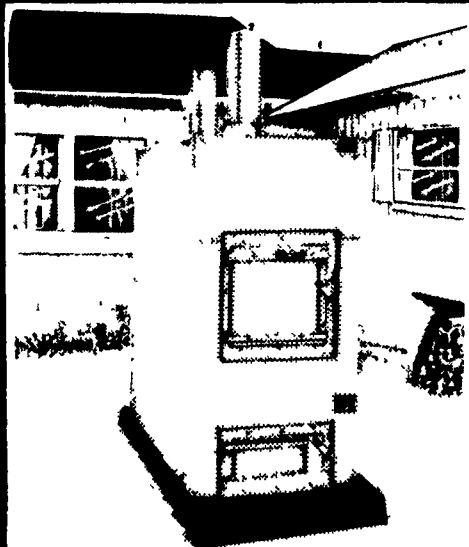
"He's nice to work with, he's very cooperative, he looks for advice and we give it to him when we go to test. He has a great bunch of cows up there, no doubt," Somers said. "I think he's going to stay on top for awhile. He'll be able to cull better, now that the barn's full. He'll go up higher and he'll be a tough one to catch."

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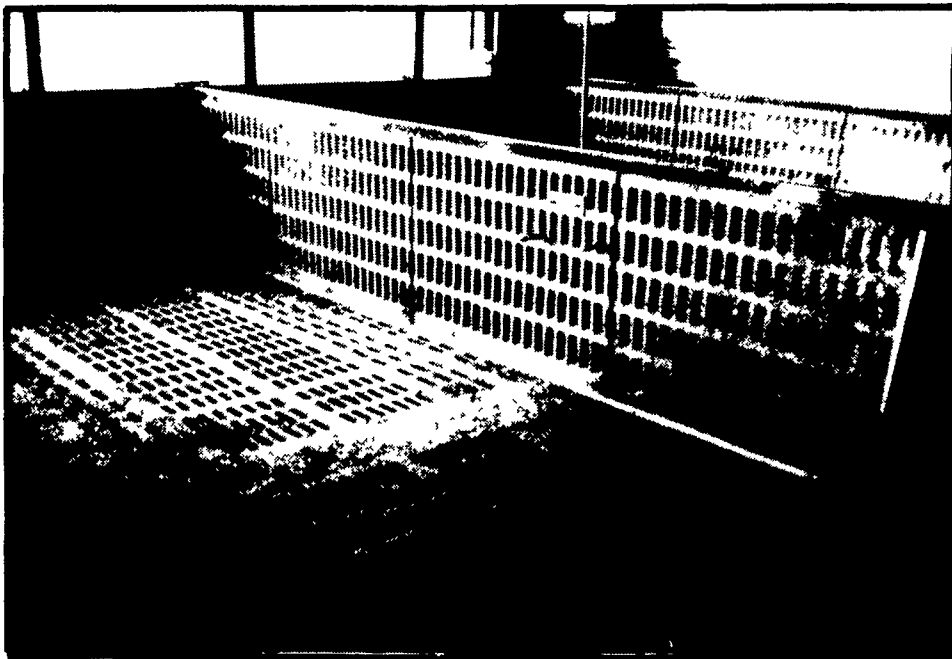
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