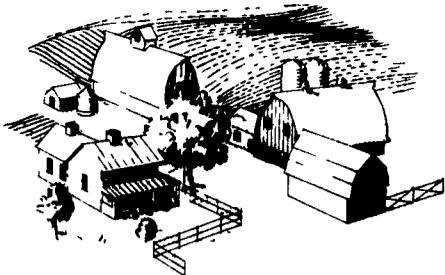


# FAR MANAGEMENT



## FARMLAND PRESERVATION UPDATE

Alan W. Strock  
Multicounty Farm  
Management Agent

They found broad support across the state for farmland preservation. The greatest support came from the capital region, the seven-county area surrounding Harrisburg, that includes Lancaster County and also much of the state's most fertile agricultural land.

### Lost Farmland

Between 1982 and 1987, 4,000 Pennsylvania farms were lost, along with 431,000 acres of farmland, according to the 1987 U.S. Census of Agriculture. Also between 1982 and 1987, Lancaster County lost 216 farms and 13,332 acres of farmland.

The 1980's concern over commercial and residential development and suburban sprawl prompted the passage of state legislation designed to encourage farmers to keep land in agricultural production.

On November 3, 1987, by passing a statewide referendum, Pennsylvania residents established a

\$100 million bond issue "for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements for the preservation of farmland." This program has greatly increased Pennsylvania's farmland preservation efforts.

Agricultural conservation easements resemble more commonly known "development rights."

### Conservation Easement Purchase Program

Twenty-eight of the 67 counties have boards that have set up prioritized local needs and wants that conform with state guidelines to purchase easement rights within the framework of state law.

Lancaster and Chester counties have received \$8.4 million and \$8.5 million, respectively, from the state bond fund. Counties have also contributed to the cost of locally approved programs.

Lancaster and Chester counties have contributed a little more than \$3 million and \$3.6 million, respectively, to purchase easements since 1988.

Through the easement purchase program in Lancaster County alone, Lancaster County and the Pennsylvania have purchased easements from 38 farms covering roughly 3,500 acres. Lancaster County alone has acquired easements through purchase or gift of 45 farms covering about 3,200 acres.

Permanent Funding  
Beginning in July of 1993, the

Conservation Easement Purchase program will be permanently funded by a \$.02 per pack tax on cigarettes.

Present projections indicate this would yield approximately 15-20 million dollars per year.

### Restricted Uses

The farmland preservation program is entirely voluntary. No force is placed on farmers to sell their conservation easements.

If an easement is purchased, restrictions are placed on the deed that allow only agriculture uses. The farmer's land must be in an agriculture security area to qualify for the easement purchase program.

The conservation easement value is determined by subtracting the appraised agricultural value from the appraised fair market value of the property. That means a farm with a conservation easement worth \$400,000 could be preserved as farmland forever for \$400,000 or less. Actual purchase price may be any value up to 100 percent of the appraised easement value.

### Not An Easy Decision

The process of establishing guidelines for most counties was a

lengthy process.

Likewise, an individual farmer's decision to enter the program should not be taken lightly.

A farmer must compare current and potential income, expenses and taxes — all in light of their long-term financial plan. The decision should be based on a very careful consideration of personal and family goals.

Farmers must consider estate planning objectives and real estate and income tax consequences, along with numerous other personal factors.

The issues involved in farmland preservation are extremely complex. However, local officials will have to determine the tax impact of less development in their boundaries. The purchase of conservation easements are costly and include complex procedures and ideas.

### Support For Farmland Preservation

Although statewide support for farmland preservation is strong, those who give it a high priority are also more likely to think livestock farming and pesticide and fertilizer usage should be restricted near residential areas.

Nearly one-third of respondents

(Turn to Page C4)

# TRUCKLOAD FAN SALE



HIRED-HAND

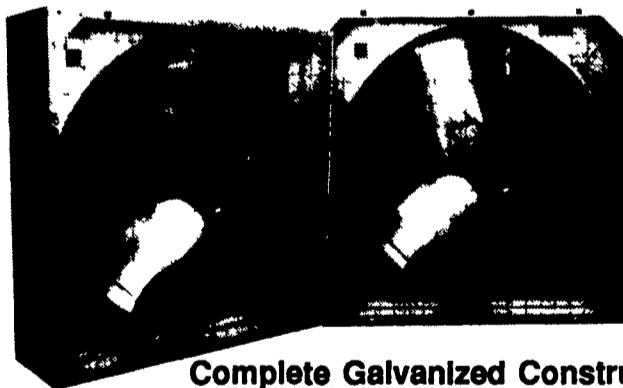
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