

# Land Preservation Program Reaches Milestone

DAUPHIN (Dauphin Co.) — The Dauphin County Commissioners and the Dauphin County Agricultural and Land Preservation Board have recently announced the reaching of a milestone in the County's Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program.

In September, the program preserved permanently its 1,000th acre of Dauphin County farmland.

As with previous easement purchases, to show support for the program, the Dauphin County Commissioners presented a Londonderry Township landowner with a check from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as payment for the easement which will permanently preserve this farm.

The county commissioners and the county board believe 1993 to be a breakthrough year for the program, which seems to be gaining momentum both in Dauphin County and the state. The 1993 program year has been the first year that the county program was unable to find all eligible and

interested applicants in Dauphin County.

Dauphin County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program has been accepting applications since 1991. In 1991, seven applications were received and, in 1992, eight applications were received. This year, 17 new applications were received. This increase in applications reflects the increase in both awareness of and interest in the program.

The Easement Purchase Program is a state level program administered at the county level by participating counties. More than 30 counties currently have approved programs. Counties wishing to participate must appoint boards and develop an administrative program that must be approved by the state board before applications may be accepted. Once approved, the county is eligible for state funding through grants and matching funds. The intent of the program is to preserve Pennsylvania's prime farmland by offering landowners an alternative to develop-

ment. That alternative is the purchase of agricultural conservation easements.

A conservation easement is an interest in a piece of land which gives the owners of the easement the right to protect a feature of the land. In this case, the protected feature is agriculture. Purchasing a conservation easement may be thought of as purchasing development rights. The price of the easement is determined by a qualified, certified appraiser.

In Dauphin County, applicants are ranked by a 300 point scoring system which gives up to 100 points for soil quality and up to 200 points for location, stewardship, surrounding land use, and productivity. Applications are prioritized based primarily on the ranking system. All applications which are not funded for a given year are automatically carried into the following year and re-ranked with new applicants. Applying for the program does not commit either the landowner to sell or the state to purchase an easement.

Commitment to sell and purchase the easement occurs only if the landowner accepts the offered easement value and the state board approves the purchase.

To date in Dauphin County, nine easements have been purchased, preserving more than 1,000 acres of farmland for the future. Five additional easement purchases have been approved totalling 600 acres, bringing the total acreage protected to more than 1,600 acres.

Following is a list of completed or approved purchases by township and acreage through November 30, 1993: Jackson Township -

one Easement, 51 acres; Londonderry Township - two Easements, 252 acres; Lykens Township - three easements, 375 acres; Mifflin Township - one easement, 115 acres; Upper Paxton Township - five easements, 589 acres.

Anyone interested in additional information concerning easements purchased or about Dauphin County's programs, or in obtaining an application, may contact Bob Christoff at the Dauphin County Conservation District in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Center, 1451 Peters Mountain Road, Dauphin, PA 17018, (717) 921-8100.

## Feed Grains Council To Meet

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. agriculture's ability to "Build For Tomorrow" depends on its ability to strategize and adapt to changing market conditions.

The program of the 34th membership meeting of the U.S. Feed Grains Council (USFGC), to be held Feb. 6-9 at the Radisson Resort, Scottsdale, Ariz., is designed with that in mind.

Veteran politician Barry Goldwater will offer his perspective on the world political situation. He is followed by Gene Moos, undersecretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), who will speak about the departmental reorganization and the effects of NAFTA and GATT. David Hardy, formerly of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is scheduled to speak on political unity within the agricultural community in an address entitled "Agriculture: Looking for an Agenda."

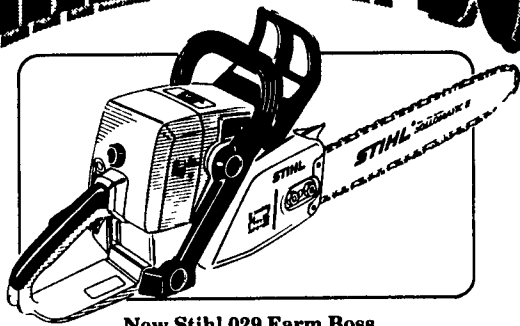
In addition, a series of presenta-

tions will focus on the political, economic, and agricultural outlook in the People's Republic of China. Dr. Min Chen, American Graduate School of International Management, will address the Chinese business environment. The Hale Group will present their evaluation of current USFGC programs in that country. Jeff Brown, USFGC director/China, will conclude the presentation with a look at the transitions occurring in China.

While the Army Corps of Engineers will discuss the levee system after the 1993 flood, Doanes Agricultural Service will present an overview of the Economic, agronomic, and sociological effects of the event.

During the meeting, the council will release its 1994 World Demand Forecast, a unique projection of world feed grains production, consumption, prices, and trade for the coming decade.

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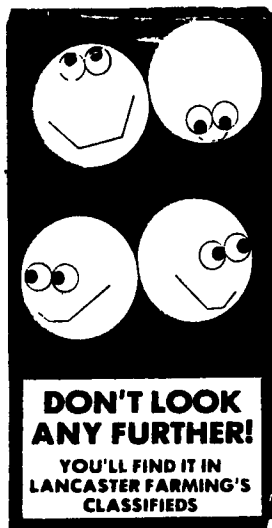
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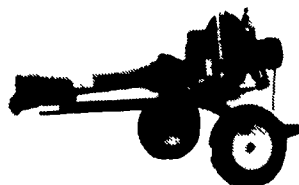


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