

Corn Growers Need

(Continued from Page A34) groups are pushing hard to have the clean water act reauthorization bill take into account nonpoint source pollution, which targets farmers.

The bill may be the only agriculture/environmental bill

signed by the president this year, said Stawick.

Stawick explained the history of the bill and what it would involve.

The Clean Water Act, signed into law in 1972, dealt with the "point" sources of pollution directly from industry. The act was

last reauthorized in 1987.

But with the proposed bill, the biggest concerns are the nonpoint sources, including nitrogen from either commercial or animal fertilizer. The environmental groups claim farmers are the culprits, even though there is evidence that a big nonpoint source contributor has been sewage treatment facilities that need upgrading, in addition to golf courses and lawn care systems.

Stawick said the NCGA is working with a coalition, including row-crop organizations, crop

industry representatives, The Fertilizer Institute, and animal livestock groups to provide data that shows that farmers are responsible with nitrogen use. However, said Stawick, the committees in Congress that the coalition faces "do not necessarily have agricultural interests at the top of their list."

"Many environmental groups would like to have a blanket national program of management measures for nutrients, for sediment, for pesticides, and other

forms of nonpoint source pollution."

The Senate bill, which may combine with a similar bill under House review, may mandate stricter requirements. It would differ in several ways from the current, voluntary authorization.

But NCGA and the coalition insists that the voluntary program, in place since 1987, is "not broken," Stawick said. "It's just not well funded."


Congress authorized about \$130 million to be spent last year, but to implement the authorization, only \$80 million was actually appropriated, said Stawick. Most years, only about \$50 million is appropriated, which amounts to about \$1 million per state — not enough funds to make the program work.

He said that is more money was appropriated, the incentive would be there, in addition to the expertise and material, to conduct the educational programs and cost-sharing that has proven effective.

The proposal that has the most chance of passing is the one under review from the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee.

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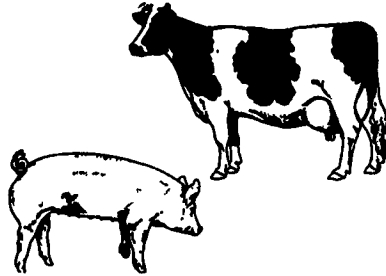
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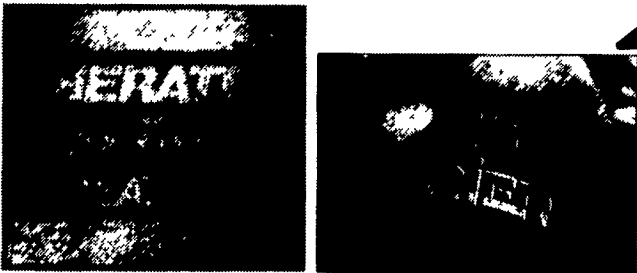
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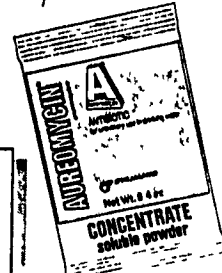
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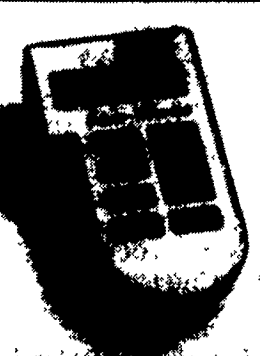
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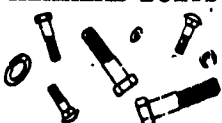


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