

# Ag Protests Fee Impositions, Supports Management Effort

(Continued from Page A1)

enacted in 1976.

Previously, water companies were held exempt from the regulations, while the regulations were held suspended for agriculture.

The actual commission members are the three respective heads of each state's natural resources agency and the U.S. secretary of interior, who is currently Bruce Babbitt. The secretary of interior is the chairman.

The commission members are to receive copies of the transcripts from the public hearings. The commission meets next 10 a.m., July 14, at the Tidewater Inn, in Easton Md.

Following the meeting, at 1:30 p.m., in the same building, the SRBC is to hold its last scheduled public hearing on the proposal.

The first hearings were held in New York last week and other hearings are scheduled to be held Wednesday in Maryland. (See the *Lancaster Farming* Calendar of Events.)

According to Richard Cairo, secretary and general counsel to the commission, comments made during the early hearings were similar to those received Tuesday during two hearings in Harrisburg — one held in the morning at the Pa. Game Commission headquarters, and the other in the evening at the SRBC headquarters on the east bank of the Susquehanna.

The morning session was held in an auditorium and about 150 people attended. The evening meeting saw fewer attend. However, space at the SRBC headquarters is limited. Some who attended the morning session also were at the evening hearing.

Opposition to the SRBC proposal focused on several points:

- That agricultural land contributes more water to the surface flows of the Susquehanna River Basin than it uses compared to other water users targeted for inclusion in a fee structure.

- That the SRBC doesn't have sound justification for holding that irrigated land is a 100-percent consumptive use of water.

- That the value of the end product from agricultural consumptive water uses (food) is very high, compared to most other uses, such as watering lawns.

- That more information and education on the proposal should be made available and that more time should be allowed for the public to understand the complexity of the issue and form opinions.

- That the economic impact to the agricultural community would be greater than to other businesses because the costs of production farming can not be passed on to consumers.

- That farming is a low profit-margin business by nature and additional costs in the form of registration fees, monitoring fees, or consumptive use fees would add to a very narrow ability for farmer survival.

- That any fees collected by the SRBC to purchase stored water would not benefit those paying the fees.

- That water storage alternatives suggested by the SRBC are not practical, or just don't make sense.

The attempt of SRBC regulations is to ensure that water demand doesn't exceed water availability.

According to the SRBC, as it stands now, if the Susquehanna

River were to drop to a flow of 1,250 million-gallons per day (the lowest drought on record), 43 percent of the water flowing in the Susquehanna would never make it to the Chesapeake Bay because it would be taken out and consumed by people, animals, plants and industry.

The projection is that, by the year 2010, 61 percent of the flowing water during a severe drought would never get to the Chesapeake.

In other words, growth in the basin has increased to the point that single entities drawing out and consuming large amounts of water are posing threats to the availability of water during drought and actually making it more difficult to maintain flows during low flows normally expected every 10 years.

The negative implications of an extremely low flow are many, but the actual experience is one the SRBC is attempting to avert.

Nevertheless, increased human growth in the basin can be expected to make water availability increasingly tighter.

The proposal by the SRBC would bring together for the first time a series of regulations that it has created since its inception.

The proposal consists of three major parts — the review and approval of water withdrawal projects; special regulations and standards; and hearing and enforcement actions.

But the proposal would eliminate a suspension for agriculture from compliance with a 1976 fee structure associated with its regulations for consumptive water use.

The fee structure is contained in a resolution separate from the

proposed regulations. That was done because the commission can act on a resolution anytime without having to go through the procedures associated with a change in regulations.

## Consumptive Use

"Consumptive" water use is that use which transforms water into a form that can not be returned to the flows of the basin.

Fees collected in lieu of some other water conservation measures to make up the difference in water needed during low flow periods are to be used for the purchase of stored water in reservoirs located within the basin.

If an entity registered to withdrawal water from the basin for consumptive use could not create an emergency backup water storage system for use during drought, or find a way to reduce water consumption below 20,000 gallons per day, on a 30-day average, then they would have to pay a make-up fee of 14 cents per 1,000 gallons used on a year-around basis.

In the proposal, agricultural consumers would only have to makeup half of what they used, or pay half the rate on a year-around basis.

That consumptive fee structure also would essentially be a cap on the size to which an agricultural operation could grow without having to make compensation for its water use.

In a public hearing handout compiled by John McSparran, SRBC chief engineer, the consumptive use regulation would require agricultural operations which consume more than 20,000 gallons per day to make some form of compensation for the water.

As an SRBC-provided guide-

line, those farms which would exceed the 20,000 gallons per day threshold would be those who spray irrigate six acres or more at a rate of 1-inch per week; livestock operations with 2,000 or more feeder hogs, or 600 sows in a farrow to finish operation; poultry operations with more than 260,000 layers, more than 590,000 broilers; and dairy operations with more than 500 milk cows.

Some earlier reports of estimates ranged.

Paul Swartz, SRBC executive director, said that according to the data they've been able to review, the total number of agricultural operations which would be affected by the consumptive use proposal would be from 500 to 600, out of the 30,000 or so farms estimated to be within the basin.

Furthermore, he said these are the larger more modern farms, implying that they carry a higher negative impact on the environment, rather than the historic family farming operation that the general public, by voter referendum, has supported through farmland preservation efforts.

It was then argued that size of an operation doesn't convey an ability to pay.

In response to questions about the accuracy of the SRBC's projections for water use, Swartz said the commission staff will "consult with land grant universities in the member states" to get a second opinion.

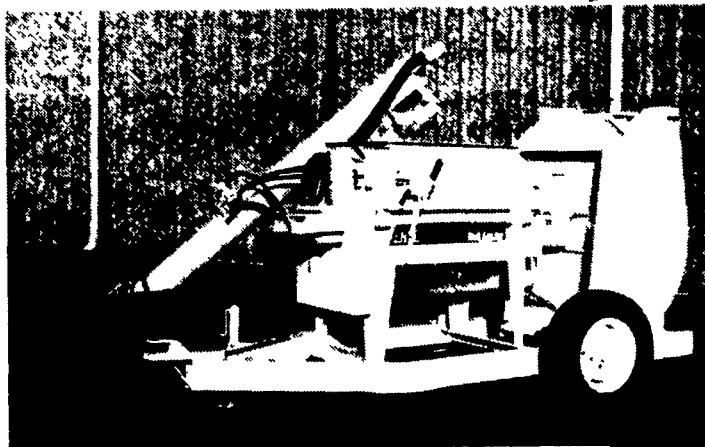
## Application And Monitoring Fees

The other part of the proposal includes a one-time application fee and then annual monitoring fees. Funds collected from those fees

(Turn to Page A28)

## THE NEW WHITE LINE FROM HENKE

*The New Spirit of Performance*



### Roller/Blower Mills

Henke blower mills are built for course cracking high moisture shell corn and blowing it into vertical silos. Blower mills are equipped with Henke's 7 inch diameter steel rolls and 60 inch blowers. Blower mills are available with 36 inch or 45 inch roll lengths.



### KwikKrusher

The Henke KwikKrusher is built to process either dry or high moisture ear corn. The KwikKrusher is equipped with 7 inch diameter steel rolls manufactured in our own plant. The KwikKrusher is available in 24 inch and 36 inch models with either an elevator discharge or with a blower discharge for filling vertical silos

Henke Machine, Inc.

Call For Dealer Nearest To You

3330 E. 23rd St. Columbus, NE 68602



### Kwikgrinder 600

The Henke Kwikgrinder is a portable heavy duty, high capacity grinder designed to quickly process large volumes of animal feeds and other agriculture commodities. A hydraulic motor, with positive chain drive around the tub base, rotates the tub and delivers materials into the path of the high speed hammers. The Kwikgrinder is designed to grind baled of loose hay, shell or ear corn, sorghum or corn stover, small grain, cottonseed hulls, stripped tree bark and bedding materials with manure.

## HENKE

*The New Spirit of Performance*

## HENKE

*The New Spirit of Performance*

1-800-228-1405

1-800-228-1405