

New Agency Combines Farm Service Functions

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — There's a new kid on the block — and it's the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

It came into being last month, when President Clinton signed into law a restructuring plan for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that will improve the way USDA agencies do business in Lancaster County, said Paul B. Kline, acting chairman of the Lancaster FSA committee.

The FSA will administer commodity price and income support

programs, farm ownership and operating loans, and the federal crop insurance program. The new agency combines all or part of three agencies familiar to farmers — the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), and the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. Other loans offered by the former FmHA will be assigned to a new rural development agency.

In addition, the FSA will offer conservation cost-share assistance

under the Agricultural Conservation Program, as well as cost-sharing and land rental payments for the Conservation Reserve Program.

"We want producers to know that the reorganization did not eliminate any programs," he said. What will change are that these services soon will be available to producers on a 'one-stop' basis. The whole purpose of the new FSA is to be able to provide better, more efficient service and to make it easier for farmers to use our

programs.

"The agencies are merging at headquarters first," Kline said. "The combination of staffs and functions at the county level will come in time. In the meantime, farmers can receive service as usual at their county offices."

In Pennsylvania most USDA offices are located with others in the same county. Some cross-

sharing of equipment and space already occurs. However, Kline said, more sharing of data will occur between staffs in these offices.

At the local level, farmer-elected committee members will continue to oversee farm program administration and will take on additional duties in overseeing other FSA programs.

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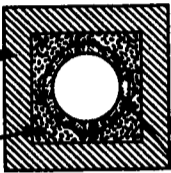
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Mid-East DHIC Approves Budget

HAGERSTOWN, Md. — The board of directors of Mid-East Dairy Herd Improvement Center recently met and adopted a budget for 1995 that does not increase rates.

According to a news release, the directors were able to approve the budget, despite an increase in health insurance rates, because of

... conservative fiscal policies ... The amounts of the budget and the insurance rate increase were not reported.

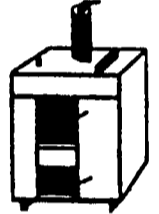
According to the news release, "Mid-East looks forward to another fine year of serving the members needs and of increasing enrollment."

Members of Mid-East DHIC are in Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

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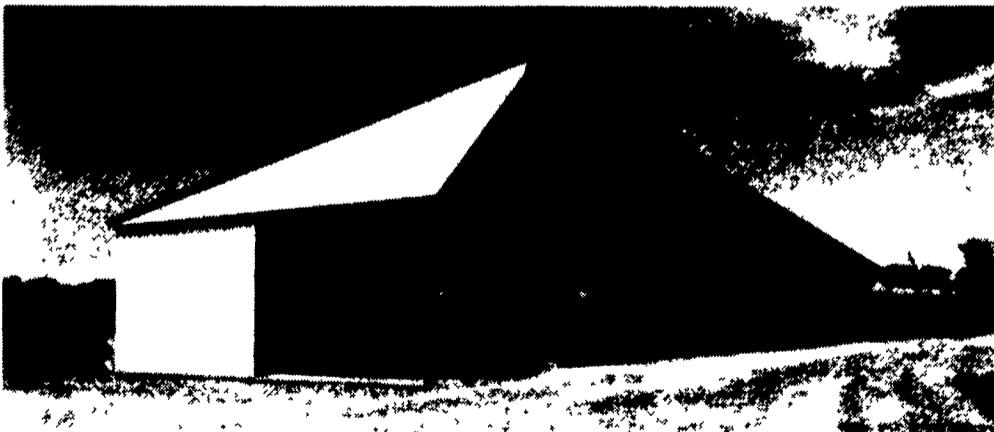
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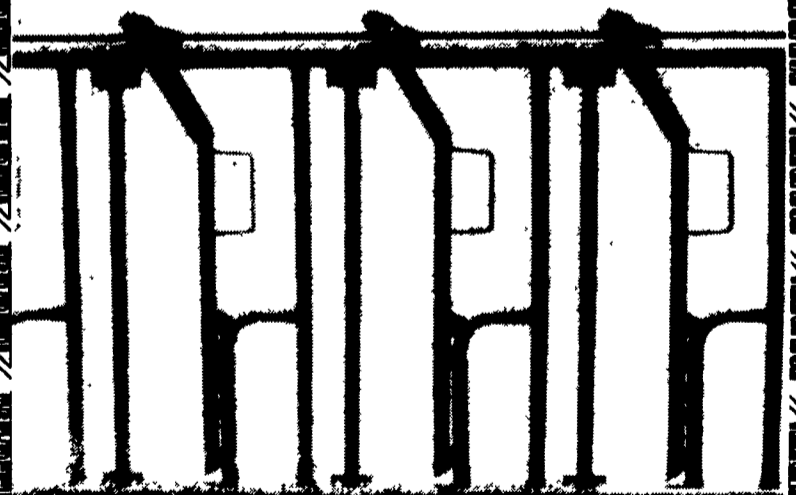
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