

Ag Groups, PennDOT Reach Compromise On Farm-Trucks

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — House Majority Whip John E. Barley this week announced a compromise has been reached with Pennsylvania's farm organizations and PennDOT to correct a costly and onerous farm vehicle inspection program from enactment before special regulations were adopted by the department.

Barley (R-Lancaster) and Sen. John Peterson (R-Venango) brought farm organizations and PennDOT together for talks earlier in the month when it appeared the department was going to enforce the same stringent inspection criteria on certain farm trucks as over-the-road trucks.

These farm trucks—used mainly on the farm—carry no license plate, but farmers must obtain a certificate of exemption every two years in order to drive on commonwealth roadways between farms.

The solution, which was offered as an amendment in the House Appropriations Committee on Monday, gives farmers an option on farm truck exemptions and inspections.

Barley said problems cropped

up as a result of passage of Act 115 of 1994, which became effective Feb. 5. PennDOT officials interpreted the new law as requiring all farm truck-exempt vehicles to get a regular safety inspection, despite the fact that many of these vehicles were heavily modified for farm use, making it impossible to meet current inspection standards.

The proposed compromise would correct this misinterpretation.

"If enacted, this proposal will allow farmers the option of a less onerous inspection procedure or, if they choose, no inspection in exchange for driving less miles on roadways," Barley said. The Lancaster County House Republican Whip noted that House Bill 511, along with the compromise language, was scheduled to be voted on by the full House on Wednesday.

Barley said the amendment would establish the following three classes:

- The Type I vehicle under 17,000 pounds will be the same as the current biennial exempt vehicle with no special safety inspection

needed. Its fee remains at \$24 and the vehicles may be used incidentally on highways during daylight and within a 25-mile radius of the farm.

- The Type II vehicle is over 17,000 pounds and is under a daytime only, 10-mile radius from the farm driving restriction with no inspection requirement. The biennial fee would be \$50.

- The Type I over 17,000 pounds vehicles would be permitted day and night driving, and a 25-mile radius for a \$100 fee. These vehicles must also submit a modified safety inspection.

"The amendment permits PennDOT to modify the inspection program for Type I vehicle over 17,000 pounds by publishing notice in the Pennsylvania Bulletin until the necessary regulations are promulgated," Barley said.

"Many farmers granted day and night driving and 25-mile radius driving in Act 115 of 1994 did not want or need this provision. This amendment would give them an option."

Responding to Barley's earlier request, Transportation Secretary-designate Bradley Mallory author-

ized the extension of the period for safety inspection of heavy farm trucks and truck-tractors until March 6. A subsequent ruling at Barley's request has suspended this program entirely until legislation is adopted. Until that time, the heavier trucks will not be permit-

ted night driving.

Barley said this proposal has the support of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, the Pennsylvania Grange, the Pennsylvania Farmers' Union and PennDOT officials.

Lancaster Conservation Banquet March 23

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)—The 44th Annual Banquet of the Lancaster County Conservation District is scheduled to be held on Thursday evening, March 23, at Yoder's Restaurant and Steakhouse, New Holland, at 7 p.m.

Tickets at the cost of \$12 each are available from any district director, members of the staff, or at the district office by calling (717) 299-5361, for a family style dinner.

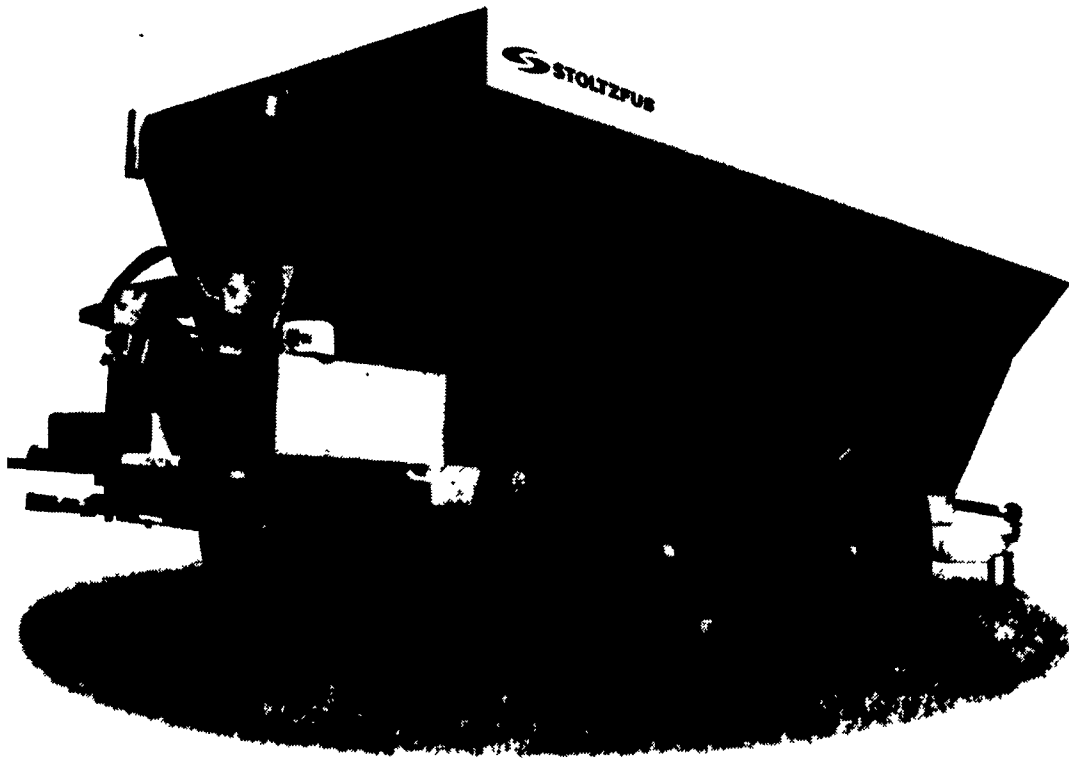
Guest speaker is Daniel Lynch,

wildlife education specialist, for the southeast region of the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Prior to Lynch's appointment to the Pennsylvania Game Commission, he was an agriculture science teacher in Berks County. His job entails doing programs for students and adults in the southeast region on a variety of topics related to wildlife education.

The district will also be presenting the Outstanding Cooperator Award for 1995 and a number of Outstanding Service awards.

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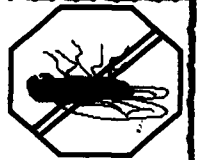
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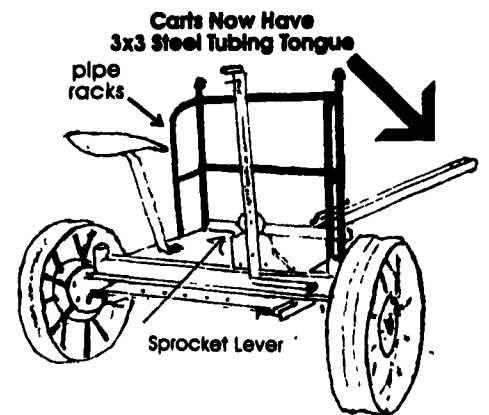
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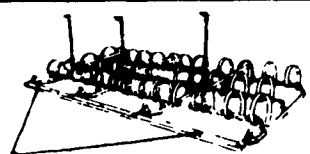
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