

Farm Bureau, Farm Link Sponsor Seminar

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — Want to retire from farming, but hate to see the land that provides sustenance carved up into a quick-cash wasteland?

No heirs, or no heirs interested in working hard to keep the farm intact or productive?

A special meeting for farmers seeking to retire who have no immediate heirs interested in continuing the farm, and who also would like to see their acreage kept in farming, can find out about the legal and personal issues involved in transferring the farm to another generation.

And they can find out about a program that can help them meet and evaluate young people claiming to have a sincere, strong interest in farming, but no foreseeable way to get access to farmland.

The meeting is set to be held 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., (Tuesday) March 28, at the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) headquarters, located in Camp Hill, near Harrisburg's west shore.

The meeting is being co-sponsored by the PFB and the Pennsylvania Farm-Link Program, an official program of the Center For Rural Pennsylvania, a bipartisan legislative agency of the state's General Assembly.

There is a \$10 fee for the meeting, but that is to be used to offset the cost of lunch and meeting materials. Those interested in attending should call (717) 761-2740 for reservations, by Wednesday, March 22.

According to Jan Carson, press spokesperson for the PFB, the joint

meeting of the two agencies resulted from interest expressed at the PFB's booth at the state Farm Show, held in January.

She said quite a number of young people asked about how to get into farming, and others, with farms, asked about how to meet up with people with a sincere interest in farming.

They were directed to the Center For Rural Pennsylvania Farm Link booth.

Farm Link is a program started last summer with the expressed mission, "To sustain Pennsylvania's farms and ranches by successfully linking individuals seeking to actively farm with farming opportunities."

The Center For Rural Pennsylvania is the Farm Link agency, and the goal of the program is to "establish and operate a database which provides information on land and resources available and individuals seeking farming opportunities, as well as providing support materials and training."

More to the point, the Farm Link is a "matchmaker" program — it is set up to allow people of similar interests to meet.

Farm Link also serves as a catalyst for services and information to those interested in developing a farm-transference relationship.

There are existing programs and services available, at little or no cost, that have been designed to help people get started in farming. The Farm Link program brings knowledge of those programs together in one agency.

According to information pro-

vided by Farm Link, "Landholders contacting the (Farm Link) agency will receive a list of individuals with compatible interests. The actual details will be worked out by the individuals. Both parties will be encouraged to participate in goal-setting workshops."

"Individuals will be screened to ensure that they have a genuine interest in becoming farmers. They will be required to attend workshops prior to being linked."

The cooperation between the PFB and the Farm Link program is not coincidental. The PFB has a long experience helping its farmer members with economics and farm management in a variety of areas, as part of its services.

The Farm Link program was originally spearheaded by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, Rodale Institute, and the Pennsylvania Farmer magazine.

However, many others became involved in the effort to make the idea a reality, including the PFB, state Rep. Sheila Miller R-Berks County, Rep. Sara Steelman, Keystone Farm Credit, Delaware Valley College, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, the Chesapeake Bay Education Office, the USDA Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service (now called the Natural Resources Service), Penn State University Cooperative Extension Service, York Farm and National Lands Trust, the Wildlands Conservancy, York Farm Credit, the state Department of Agriculture, and several farmers.

Carson said the upcoming meet-

ing is to feature several speakers, including PFB attorney Gary Heim, an inhouse expert on the transference of farms and related issues, and Don Hummel, PFB manager of its Farm Management Service. Hummel is to talk about how to transfer the farming business, and what to be aware of in doing so, along with long-range planning.

She said that there are to be several farmers who have either participated in the current Farm Link program, or who, on their own,

have transferred their farm to a non-family person interested in farming.

Also to speak is Marion Bownan, coordinator of the Farm Link program. She is to discuss the program, what it can and can not do, and the services that it can provide. For direct information on the Farm Link program, call her at (717) 787-9555.

For more information on the meeting, call Don Hummel at (717) 761-2740.

Western Md. Sets Pond Management Workshop

KEEDYSVILLE, Md. — Pond management and practices to increase the usefulness of your pond will be the focus of an upcoming program at the Western Maryland Research and Education Center (WMREC), 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 1.

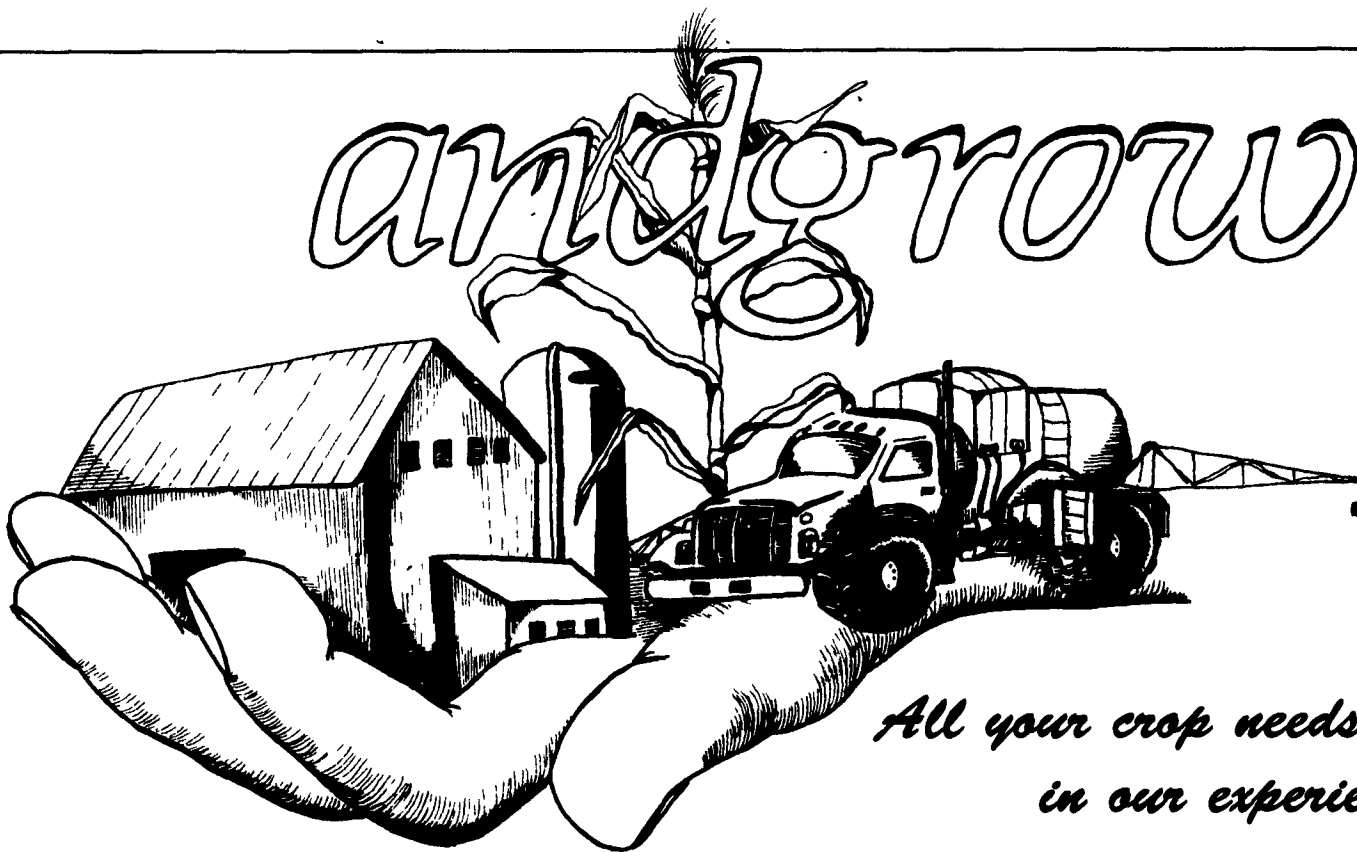
Whether your pond is utilized for recreational use, wildlife and fishing, or aquaculture production, this workshop will provide up-to-date information to participants on improving the various aspects of pond usage.

At the Western Maryland Pond Management Workshop, basic pond ecology and nutrient cycles will be discussed. Other important aspects that will be covered are

proper stocking, pond fertilization, design, liming and aeration.

On-site demonstrations at a nearby pond will provide a firsthand look at water analysis procedures and interpretation of the various measurements. Recommendations for management of bass, bluegill, trout and hybrid bass populations will also be examined. Many problems such as the overgrowth of aquatic weeds and algae overproduction can hinder the quality of plant and animal life of the pond. This workshop will offer solutions to these and many other pond issues.

The \$7 registration fee will cover the cost of handouts and break beverages. For registration or additional information, contact Steve Bogash, (301) 432-4492.



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