

# Clean And Green, Assessments Topic Of Lancaster County Meetings

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**Lancaster Farming Staff  
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)**

— About 8,700 individual farm property owners in Lancaster County face court-ordered reassessment, and the difference will show up in next year's tax bill.

As a result, several county organizations have set up a series of educational and sign-up meetings within the next several weeks.

The purpose of the educational meetings, according to tax experts who spoke with *Lancaster Farming*, is to inform the taxpayers about what to expect as a result of the countywide reassessments and how to make it easier, if requested, for landowners to appeal.

Landowners with more than 10 acres of land, or those generating more than \$2,000 per year per acre of sales from use of the agricultural land, qualify for Clean and Green, according to Leo C. Grasser, director of assessments for the county. The assessment forms, along with the Clean and Green application forms and a worksheet, will be mailed to landowners by Tuesday, May 9, according to Grasser. Deadline for Clean and Green application is June 1.

"Of the 75,000 farms in the

state that have signed up under Clean and Green, we've never had anybody come back and say that Clean and Green was not a good program," said Dr. Robert Barr, president of the Fair Tax Institute, Middletown.

Barr, who will be speaking at 17 seminars in the county sponsored by the Lancaster County Farm Bureau, emphasized that the program works to save taxes for landowners.

According to Grasser, for the 1996 tax year, land with Class 1 soils will be taxed at \$1,220 per acre under Clean and Green. Under fair market value, land with Class 1 soils will be taxed anywhere from \$4,000-\$6,000 and even higher, depending on location, buildings, and other factors.

Dr. Robert S. Barr, who will be speaking in the upcoming weeks at the many different Lancaster County school districts, emphasized that the meetings are free and open to the public. The seminars, running two hours each day, will provide all county taxpayers, including homeowners, commercial industrial owners, and farmers, with the facts about reassessment and how to gather evidence for appeal.

For too long, property owners relied on the county or local school district to make the decisions for them, and landowners went along with the decision, according to Barr. But Barr said that the days are coming when property owners "must take charge of managing their real estate taxes."

"I will tell them what they need to know to manage their real estate taxes," said Barr.

According to the county farm bureau, within the next week, the Lancaster County commissioners will be mailing about 167,000 notices of new assessments in the county. Of that, approximately 9,500 are farmers and forest owners, according to Grasser. This completes the final phase of the three-year court-ordered reassessment project.

Following is list of educational seminars scheduled by the Lancaster County Farm Bureau. Landowners should try to schedule a meeting that is within their school district.

- May 8, Ephrata School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 9, Garden Spot High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.

- May 10, Manheim Central High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 11, Cocalico High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 15, Manheim Township High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 16, Solanco High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 17, Centerville Middle School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 18, Lancaster Mennonite High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 22, Penn Manor High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 23, Elizabethtown High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 24, Warwick High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 25, Pequea Valley High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
- May 26, Clean and Green meeting, Farm and Home Center.
- May 30, Donegal High School


- Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
  - May 31, Conestoga Valley Middle School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
  - June 1, Columbia Borough High School Auditorium, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.
  - Date pending, Lampeter-Strasburg School District.
- For more information about the educational meetings, contact Dr. Robert S. Barr, Fair Tax Institute, 1801 Oberlin Rd., Suite 200, Middletown, PA 17057-2953, (717) 985-0300.

Also, the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry Agriculture Committee is working with several townships to coordinate a series of Clean and Green enrollment dropoff locations throughout the county in the next several weeks. At the locations, personnel will be available to answer questions. Also, landowners can drop off their Clean and Green enrollment forms (the forms are also available at the locations). Following is a list of the dropoff locations sponsored by the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce:

- May 9, Ephrata High School,

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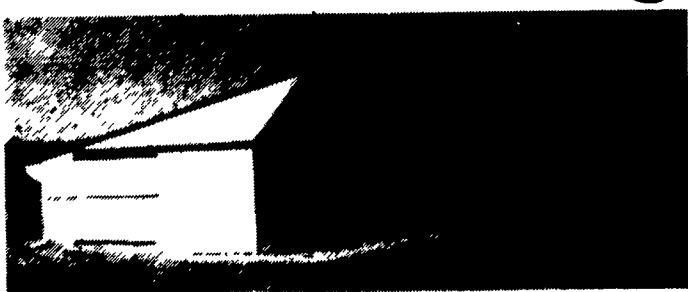
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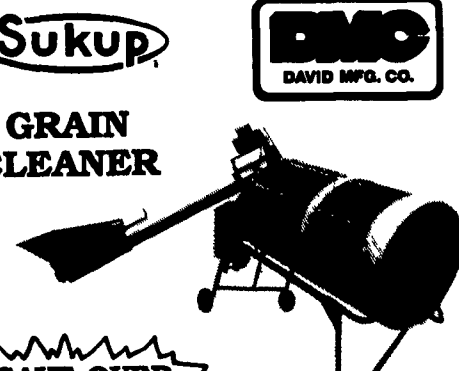
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