

# Vanishing Acres: Surrounded By Development, Farmers Face Tough Decisions

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property come from nearby Allentown and Philadelphia. His property is conveniently located for residents who want to commute from the big-city jobs and high-paying businesses in the northern and western suburbs of Philadelphia. Seipt has difficulty moving his equipment during the day because of the high amount of residential traffic.

Freddy-Hills Farms is within 35 minutes of Philadelphia's International Airport, within easy access

Homes Retirement Community development which borders his farm, there was concern the retirement community was "too far out in the country," said Jacob. A relative told him, "the farm is too far way, there is no bus service, people won't want to come out here. Now look where we're at — we're right against the development."

Within the past six years, two large developments have taken up most of the space on the farm's western edge. On the eastern edge of the farm, the Landis Homes



Leon Ressler, ag environmental agent, considers the Fritz farm, pictured here, a "classic example of urban pressure against the farm." Notice how close new housing is, on left, to farm buildings. "It doesn't get any worse than that," said Ressler.

**Joe Stahl admits that the fly issue is the 'greatest challenge' for farmers.**

of the Blue Route and the state turnpike. However, Seipt has learned to live with and profit from the amount of residents by constructing an entertainment complex on his farm, which includes two miniature golf courses and batting cages. (More about Seipt later on in the series.)

In 1956, Jacob Stahl and family moved to the farm once owned by Ira Landis, Stahl's father-in-law. Stahl said that prior to the Landis

Retirement Community was built up. There are housing developments on the western edge of the Stahl farm.

For Tim Fritz, "easy access" has defined the hundreds of houses that have sprouted up in the developments just off Lincoln Highway. It is this "easy access" to several department stores, including a Wal-Mart now under construction about a mile from the farm, that has appealed to the

homeowners. A plethora of fast food restaurants, convenience stores, car dealerships, and entertainment complexes are within a half mile of the farm.

But the close proximity of houses, some within only 100 feet of manure windrows, creates special challenges for Fritz.

Leon Ressler, Lancaster County ag environment agent, considers

the Fritz farm a "classic example of urban pressure against the farm."

"It doesn't get any worse than that," said Ressler. "But there are plenty more farmers that have to deal with development right next to their fields."

Editor's Note: In part two of the series, Lancaster Farming examines steadily growing urban/rural problems. Also, what are the special challenges — and fascinating ways farmers have learned to adapt — to living close to development?

**Leon Ressler, Lancaster County ag environment agent, considers the Fritz farm a 'classic example of urban pressure against the farm.'**

**'It doesn't get any worse than that.'**



For Fred Seipt, co-owner of Freddy-Hill Farms in Landsdale, the residents who surround his property come from nearby Allentown and Philadelphia. His property is conveniently located for residents who want to commute from the big-city jobs and high-paying businesses in the northern and western suburbs of Philadelphia.

## Md. Agriculture Fairs Attract Millions

ANNAPOLIS, Md.—Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Lewis R. Riley has announced that during 1994, more than 2.1 million people attended Maryland's county fairs, the Maryland State Fair, community shows, and a wide variety of animal agricultural shows.

"We are now coming into our heavy fair and show season for 1995. Once again, we can expect more than two million people to come to these events and learn about agriculture while they are having fun. The recent Delmarva Chicken Festival in Federalsburg, Md., was extremely successful, and I expect the county fairs held across the state will continue to be

extremely popular. All of these events are tremendous opportunities for our state's agricultural industry to meet and talk to its customers," Riley said.

During 1994, some 58,000 exhibitors participated in these fairs with more than 155,000 exhibits. The Maryland Agricultural Fair Board, working through the Maryland Department of Agriculture, supports these shows and each year produces a comprehensive fair and show schedule. The 1995 Fair and Show Schedule may be obtained from the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Marketing Services, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401, (410) 841-5770.

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