

# 'Farmer' Preservation Is Answer To Save Farmland

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Thursday night at the Farm and Home Center was slated as a time to learn and share thoughts and ideas about guarding prime farmland.

After the three-hour meeting, Jim Shirk, agriculture services manager for the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said, "This meeting was not about farmland preservation but about farmer preservation."

His comment echoed the far-  
***This meeting was not about farmland preservation but about farmer preservation.'***

mers' attitude that farmland is protected as long as farmers can profitably make a living on the land.

Presentations by representatives from business and farming communities, the planning commission, the tourist industry, and a panel of elected officials fielding questions from the audience centered on working together to keep the county as a leading national agricultural center and not to follow the demise of Los Angeles, which was at one time the leading ag producing country in the nation and has now fallen to 92nd place.

During the same period of time,

from 1944 until the present, Lancaster County has managed to maintain its standing of being the 15th to 13th ag producing county, but leaders warned that the agricultural area is in grave danger of following Los Angeles unless steps are taken now.

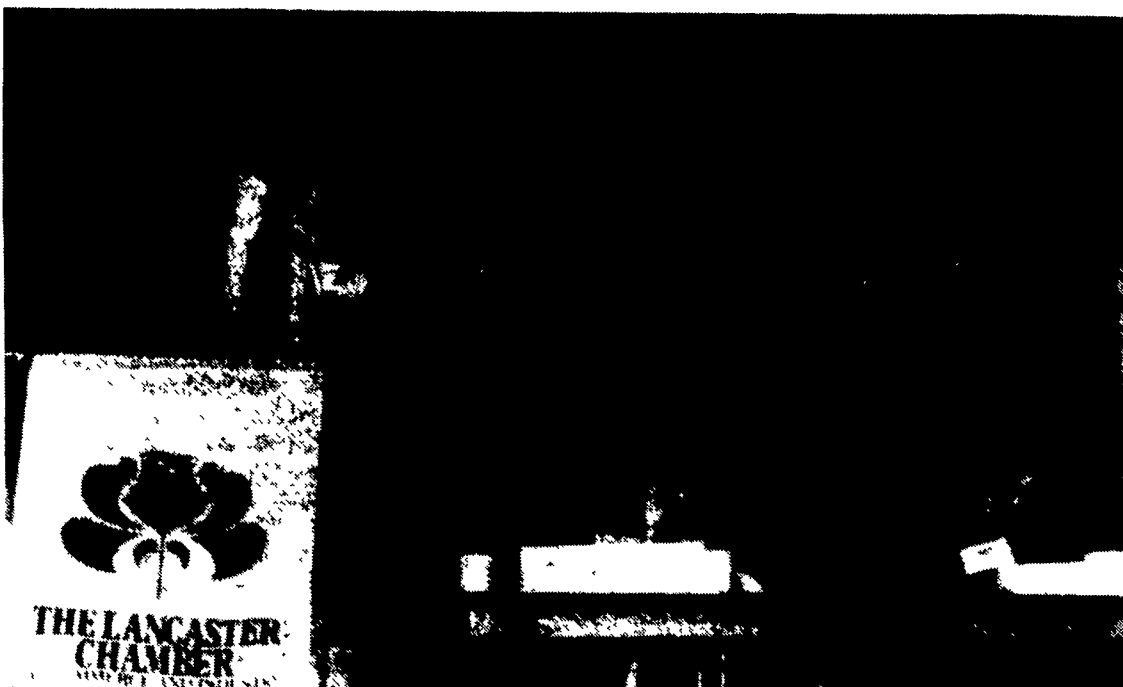
Ron Bailey of the Lancaster County Planning Commission said that while many defy change they should realize that the county is the result of change. Although the area is considered one of the prime farmland spots, it was at one time forest.

"Change isn't the problem, it's how we are changing," Bailey said. "We are converting the most productive land in the world into lawn."

With aerial photographs of the area, Bailey illustrated how the county has sprawled over a 60 to 70 square mile area to hold about the same amount of people that 7½ -miles of the city holds. Bailey said the problem is that most homes are built on large lots.

In addition, there is the problem with automobiles. He said that eight vacant parking spaces for every car in the county are needed at all times or it is perceived that there is not enough parking.

Harry Flick of the Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau reported that tourists come to the area primarily to see the rural



Farmer Mike Brubaker addresses concerns from his perspective while Ron Bailey, center, of the Lancaster County Planning Commission, and Harry Flick, of the Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau, listen.

farmland. If it is swallowed up in development, the county will lose the \$349 million and the many jobs the tourist industry creates.

In a fiery speech, Darwin Boyd of Corestates Bank supported the need to preserve farmland for its social, economical, and culture importance.

"The problem is not growth, but

how it is accomplished. The real land grabber is one house on 1½ -acres of land," Boyd said.

He spoke of the need for farmers to have the freedom to expand cottage industries, livestock operations, and whatever needs to be done to keep the farm viable. "Some ordinances are too restrictive," he said.

Boyd sees manufacturing, ag industry, and marketing as impacting each other favorably and necessary.

"Business growth is necessary and need not be construed as the enemy," he said.

Mike Brubaker, a farmer from East Donegal Township, told how the margin for profitability is much tighter for farmers than before. He encouraged farmers to develop positive relationships with neighbors in order to educate them and keep a farmer-friendly environment.

During the latter part of the meeting, questions from an audience of 150 were answered by a

panel made up of Sen. Noah Wenger, 36th Legislative district; Rep. John Barley, 100th legislative district; Terry Kauffman, county commissioner, and Nelson Rohrer,

***... the problem is that most homes are built on large lots.***

Manheim Township board of supervisors.

Harold Musser, a Mount Joy farmer, voiced his frustration with zoning regulations in having to compile a stormwater runoff plan, land development plan, earth disturbance plan, manure management plan, and attaining county approval for any possible ventures in expanding the family farm.

Musser sees the farmer as having no voting power when compared to the majority of the community. He believes his tax dollars go to bring more tourists to the area who like it so much they decide to move to the county, thereby

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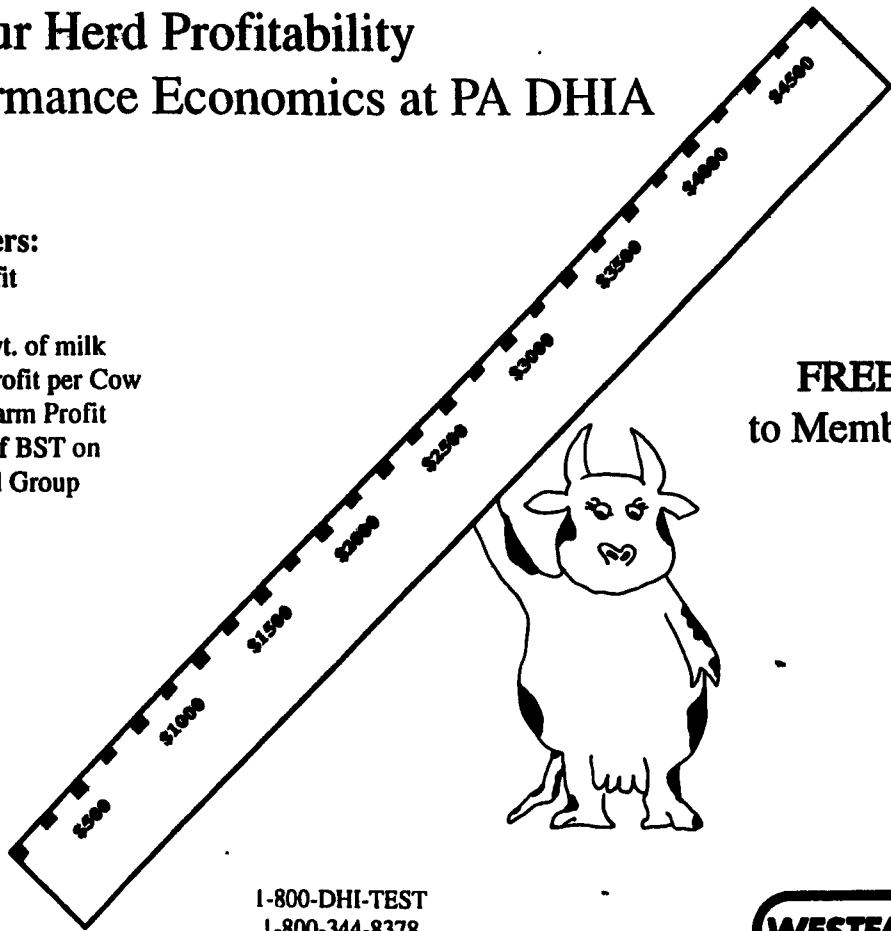
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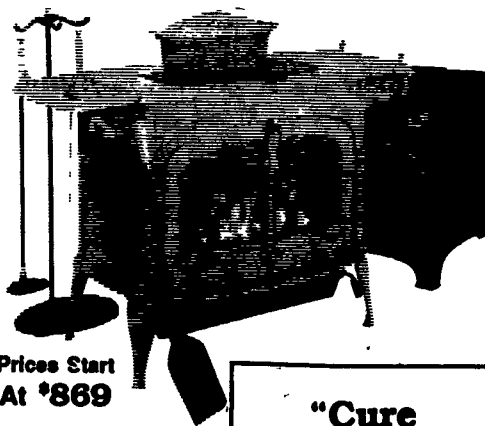
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