



FARM FORUM

cattle and poultry. And the industry prefers these smaller sizes for several reasons, including improved biosecurity and reduced risk.

Our advanced farms produce quality, safe food at a reasonable cost. Pennsylvania has been the leader in designing and implementing food safety programs for eggs and pork. The Pennsylvania Egg Quality Assurance Program has more than 98 percent of the state laying hens enrolled, which has resulted in more than a 40 percent decline in Salmonella enteritidis human outbreaks in the Northeast.

Also, our office in 1998 certified 97 and recertified 57 pork farmers in the national Pork Quality Assurance program. The certification accounted for 804,051 head of annual hog marketings in southeast Pennsylvania.

These are a few examples of how science, education, government and industry have worked

together to improve the environment and insure a safe food supply.

John Schwartz, Ph.D.
Lancaster County
Extension Director
Penn State
Cooperative Extension

Editor:

Just below the Lancaster Sunday News Oct. 10 front page article on farming and the environment was a story on the huge boom in building permits. This region has more registered vehicles than people and sprawl development continues to chew up farmland and open space.

This summer we had the dirtiest air we have had in a decade.

Meanwhile, advanced farms in the area designed and built with modern technology to conserve water, control runoff, and manage nutrients to meet industry, federal, and state standards. They use the latest in scientific research to make certain livestock are healthy so the food produced for our tables is safe.

This is the way farming is evolving so that we can meet consumer needs and address environmental concerns. It meets economic needs, both for the consumer and for the farmer, who now must compete in a far broader geographical area. It also is designed to produce produce more on less land.

This new way of doing business enabled many of our smaller farms to survive the summer's drought and heat because they were more diversified and reduced risk through their contracts for livestock production with advanced farm networks.

Unfortunately, the Lancaster Sunday News article failed to address these issues, which are important to public understanding and have significant consequences for our efforts in farmland preservation and food production.

Ronald E. Kreider
President
Kreider Dairy Farms, Inc.
Manheim

Editor:

The Sunday News suggestion that breeding animals for food threatens the planet (lead story, Oct. 10) was scary with concerns, but not true.

There is far more environmental protection than the story led readers to believe. Pennsylvania has been a leader in regulation of advanced livestock farms, passing a Nutrient Management Act back in 1993.

In addition, a recent report from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) states from 1985 to 1997 there has been a

downward trend in phosphorus concentration in the central and southern parts of the basin while downward trends in nitrogen were detected at all seven monitoring stations in the basin.

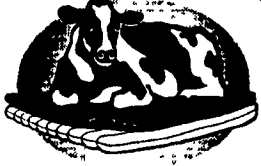
The SRBC states the decline is a result of several combined factors including agricultural best management practices.

Pennsylvania farms are not the "giant barns" housing tens of thousands of animals alluded to in the article. As our extension agent suggested, our facilities average about 2,500 head of hogs and similar animal equivalency units for

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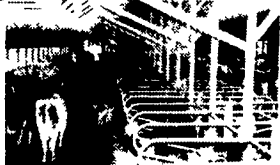
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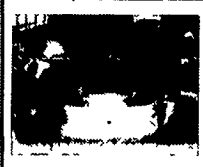
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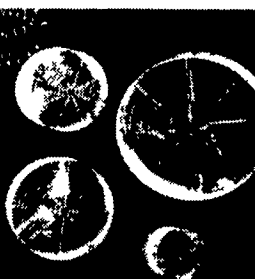
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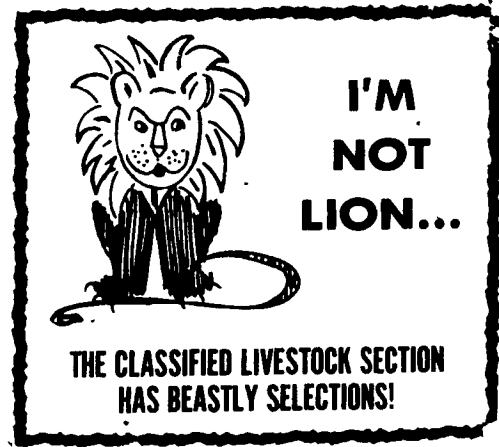
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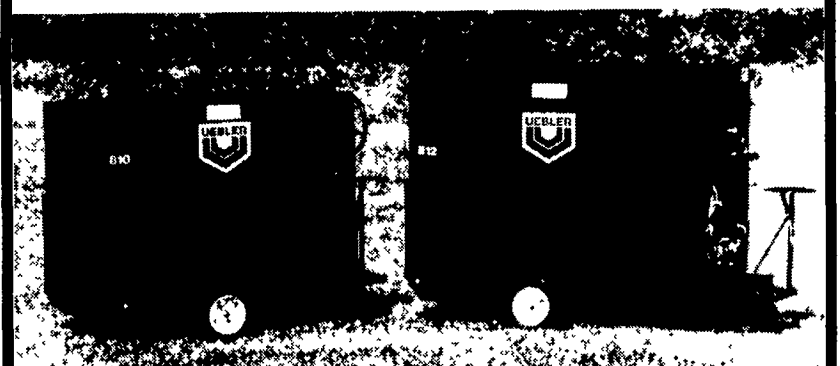


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