

Issues Forum

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land, Dauphin, York, and Lancaster counties, Welsh said.

Welsh was first hired as an ag economic development specialist by the York County Economic Development Corporation. Penn Mar Ethanol was recently formed to move ahead with the ethanol project.

In the spring of 2002, an outside consultant performed a feasibility study for the project. The study indicated positive econom-

ic prospects for a plant in south-central Pennsylvania that would produce 40 million gallons of ethanol per year from corn. The plant would also produce 131,000 tons per year of feed-grade dried distiller grains, as well as 97,000 tons of carbon dioxide, potentially marketable to the region's carbonated beverage industry.

Welsh noted that such a facility could add about \$24.7 million a year to the local economy and boost the value of corn.

One of the factors that favor strong future markets for ethanol is the likely banning of MTBE — shown to be a human health hazard — as a gasoline additive. Ethanol is a safe and environmentally sound replacement for MTBE in gasoline.

California banned MTBE within the past two years, and the move toward banning it is expected to come to the Northeast, according to Welsh, who said the additive is "headed down the same path as asbestos."

Another advantage of ethanol is its potential ability to help wean the U.S. off of foreign oil dependency.

Most of the country's 70 ethanol plants are located in the Mid-



About 40 people from the agribusiness community attended the ag issues forum Thursday morning.

west. None to date have been built in East Coast states. However, Welsh said that Pennsylvania's proximity to major markets for ethanol and its co-products, as well as the positive corn basis here, help make the prospects feasible.

While Pennsylvania's corn production varies widely from year to year, "demand is always

met," Welsh said.

Railway infrastructure for bringing in midwestern corn, plus the fact that 1/3 of the corn used in ethanol production comes out as distiller grain that could be used to feed Pennsylvania livestock, would help offset the fact that Pennsylvania is a corn deficit state, Welsh pointed out.

The Ag Issues Forum was or-

ganized by Mike Brubaker of TeamAg, along with Brent Landis, ag coordinator at the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Bob Zook, vice president of the Ephrata National Bank.

About 40 people from the agribusiness community attended, including four members of the Hans Herr FFA Chapter.



Tom Baldrige urges agribusiness leaders to help "preserve the farmer."

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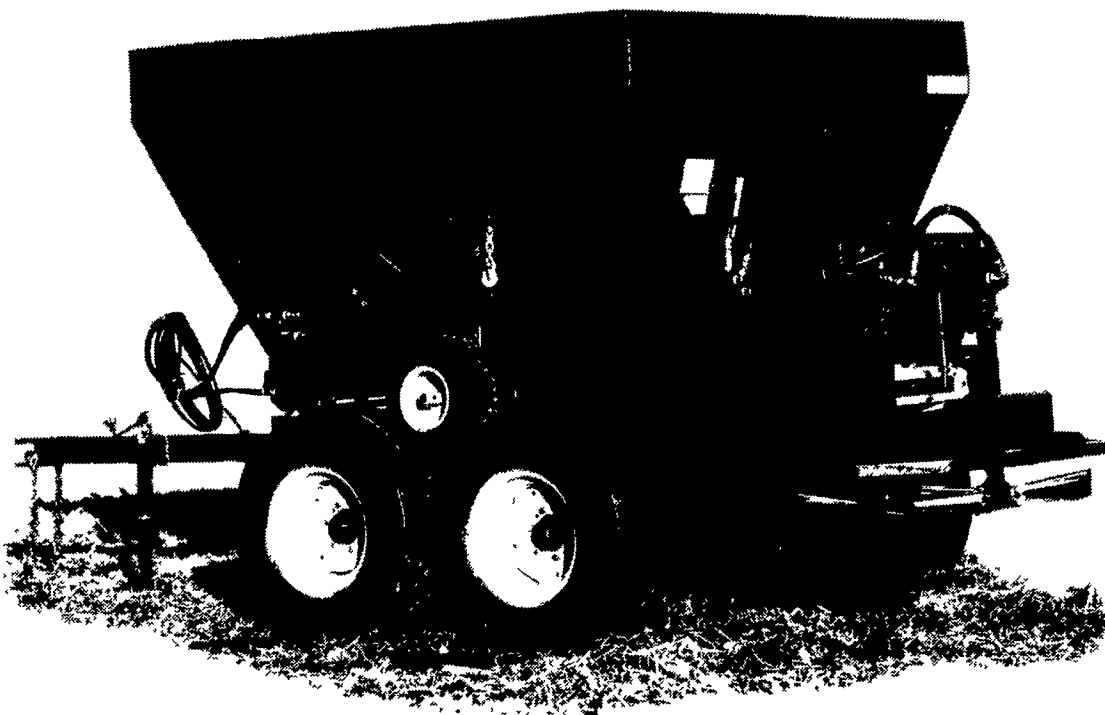
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