

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

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used to determine the best location for the well and two others in the township. Since when has technological data been allowed to override the law of the land?

The township says it needs to make sure that there is a secure water supply in case any of its other municipal wells should fail. The township is also gearing up for future commercial and residential development. But it hasn't properly explained why the water for this growth must come from a dairy farm that will see none of the benefits of that growth.

Township leaders should not forget that one of the main reasons new residents (and businesses, as a result) are drawn to areas such as East Cocalico in the first place is the well-managed and beautiful farmland found on properties like the Zimmerman's.

And, if more and more farms like the Zimmerman's continue to be squeezed out for development, where will townships find enough open land to recharge their groundwater supply in the future?

Last year, these pages hosted a lively debate over SB 1413, state legislation that would have given farmers more leverage against township restrictions. The bill failed to pass the Pennsylvania House of Representatives last fall, but the issue is as pertinent as ever.

Last year's debate was divided between advocates of large-scale, confinement livestock operations and supporters of small, diversified farms.

The latter group opposed SB 1413 on the grounds that township officials are elected to take care of all their residents, including those who believe that their quality of life is threatened by industrial-scale agriculture. They called the bill an attempt to intimidate townships into allowing large livestock producers to keep growing.

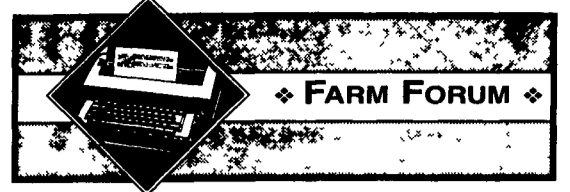
Large-scale advocates supported the bill, decrying what they called "illegal" township restrictions imposed on a number of confinement hog and poultry operations in the state. They argue that those large operations, operated mostly by families, are necessary for ag's survival.

The Zimmerman case should help these two groups see that they have more in common than they might have realized in the past.

The Zimmermans don't want to put in an industrial-scale livestock operation. They're not asking for anything — except to be able to keep dairy farming on their land.

The issue here isn't about big vs. small operations or any other conflicting agricultural ideologies.

It's about the survival of agriculture in Pennsylvania, period.



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very well and we remain optimistic about the brand's long term prospects. However, delays in the initial launch of Quest, as well as the external factors that we discussed in our call, have led us to conclude that we have sufficient tobacco inventory to carry us through the next season. We will not be growing commercial quantities of tobacco in 2003 for Quest in any location, and would certainly turn to Pennsylvania first in the unlikely event that anything changes. Pennsylvania will continue to be our primary option for growing tobacco in the future.

At this time, we have every intention and expectation that we will resume growing tobacco for Quest in 2004. We will stay in direct communication with your office to assure that you are well aware of our plans at the earliest possible date.

Thanks you for your support, and we look forward to growing our Quest tobacco in Pennsylvania well into the future.

Bennett S. LeBow
Vector Tobacco Inc.
Timberlake, N.C.

Summit To Focus On Use Of Manure As Renewable Energy

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — When life hands you lemons, make lemonade. But what do you do when life hands you manure?

Simple. Make electricity.

It's not pie-in-the-sky (or cow-pie-in-the-coral) thinking either. The technology is here, and it's already in use throughout the world. It's called anaerobic digestion — a process by which synergistic actions between bacteria act to breakdown waste products. One of the resulting by-products of that natural process is a biogas that can be used to generate electricity.

In addition to being a source of renewable energy, experts say anaerobic digester (AD) technology could effectively and efficiently address a number of persistent environmental problems associated with agricultural and municipal waste management including water quality and air quality.

The question for policy makers and industry professionals is how to make more wide-spread use of that technology. Consequently, a two-day summit, June 2-4 at the Hilton North Raleigh in Raleigh, N.C. will provide a forum to address some of the barriers, both technological and institutional, facing AD technology.

Sponsored by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the U.S. Dept. of Energy and the Water Environment Federation (WEF), the summit will also provide a forum for examining the opportunities for public and private sectors to work together to facilitate digester adoption within the context of animal waste management, rural economic development, and environmental improvement.

For more information, contact the Water Environment Federation at confinfo@wef.org, call: (800) 666-0206, or visit the WEF Website at <http://www.wef.org/Conferences/>.

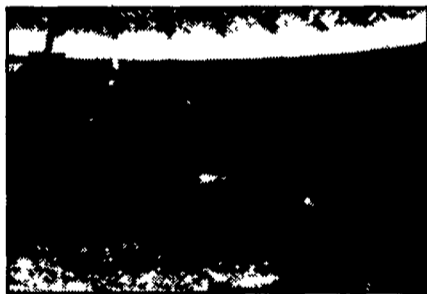
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