

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

(Continued from Page A10)

I believe it is time for a change in tactics before it is too late. Almost every producer in Maryland farms less than three hours from a major metropolitan area. This should give us a huge advantage, but to this point it has not. This is the time for agriculture to look outside its normal comfort zone and shift the political focus to the development of economically sustainable highly diversified agriculture.

Many of the current issues faced by the state, county, and municipal governments regarding sprawl, development pressure, impact fees, tax increases, and needs for more and larger roads can be significantly reduced if agricultural land, communities, and farmers are preserved, because they can continue to make a living from the land. The interests of agriculture and all the residents of the state have never been so close. It is time to develop policies, procedures, and programs that encourage grocery stores, restaurants, and schools to use more locally produced food.

Concepts such as a Maryland cheese factory that would provide producers with the opportunity to develop value-added markets for their milk could be a first step. Maryland and its counties have provided incentives for industry to come into the state and to renovate old abandoned sites and add jobs in their communities. It is time that we focus these dollars and incentives on an industry that is already here and is considered the preferred land use by many counties in central and western Maryland.

Maryland is an egg deficit state, but producers are not even paid enough by processors per dozen to cover the cost of production. If grocery stores could be offered some type of incentives by the state — such as some kind of tax break to carry a certain percentage of Maryland-produced eggs, and if program money could be spent to educate consumers as to the benefits of local production — these eggs could be sold at a premium price, which would be returned to the producer.

I have spoken to producers that would modify their current production systems to suit market demands if there is a price premium. This is only one example of an alternative idea to current policies, which spend money to preserve land instead of preserving viable producers. This type of effort could prevent vastly more sprawl and land development at a lower cost to the taxpayer than any development rights purchase that could ever be done.

The possibilities for other crops such as vegetables, fruit, meat, and even grain products are limited only by how much the citizens of the state care about the condition which they live in.

When agricultural issues can be couched in a way that the consumers of the state can relate to — such as preventing tax increases, relieving congestion, reducing pressure on school systems, reducing fuel consumption, food security, maintenance of Maryland's rural vistas, and improved environmental quality — the foundation for understanding of common interest and cooperation between urban and rural can be achieved. All this could be done while providing a wide variety of high quality food for Maryland consumers and giving producers a much better chance of survival and even of thriving.

In an effort to accomplish this, dialogue has begun, and I believe that an agricultural component of the smart growth package that focuses on increased economic sustainability of farms and incentives for markets to handle local food will be the lowest cost solution to sprawl in Maryland, allowing other funds to be used for urban projects.

Auction To Benefit Therapeutic Riding Program

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Saturday, June 21, Lancaster County Therapeutic Riding, Inc., will conduct its 7th Annual Benefit Auction at the Bareville Fire Hall (Route 23) beginning at 5 p.m.

According to Barry Handwerger, chairman of fundraising for the program, "Last year's auction was our best ever. There were approximately 700 items that went up for bid, all donated by generous area businesses and individuals. Committee members, volunteers, riders, and their families are all working hard to make this year's auction even more successful."

Among the items featured this year will be plants, baked goods, automotive supplies, Suk Shuglie print and poster, four Good Year tires, handmade crafts and items, collectibles, Smucker's Bells, theme baskets, pictures, furniture, gift certificates/services, 50/50 cash raffle, and so much more.

All proceeds from the auction will directly benefit Lancaster County Therapeutic Riding, Inc., a non-profit organization which provides healing for children and adults with a variety of physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. Therapeutic horseback riding offers many benefits to the riders, including improvement in their balance, strength, range of motion, coordination, and self-confidence.

The program operates out of Greystone Manor Stables near Leola and runs from March through December. Sessions are taught by riding instructors and therapists. Riders are assisted by a person leading the horse and two sidewalkers initially. For more information on the program or to donate items for the auction, you may call (717) 615-9222.



Barry Handwerger, fundraising chairman, and Robbin Flegal (left) show just a few of the many items that will go up for bid at the Annual Benefit Auction for Lancaster County Therapeutic Riding, Inc., Saturday, June 21, beginning at 5 p.m. at Bareville Fire Hall.

Pesticide Twilight Meeting June 26

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — Eastern Lancaster County Young Farmers Association's annual Summer Pesticide Twilight Meeting is scheduled here at the Sylvan Blank Farm June 26 from 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

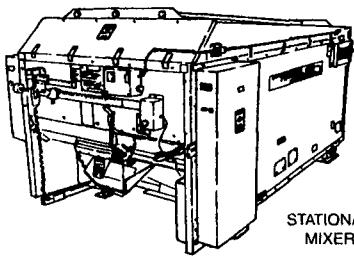
The farm is located one mile south of New Holland on Custer Avenue. Watch for signs.

Speakers include Bob Anderson, extension agent, on pesticide storage and safety, and young farmer adviser Jeff Stoltzfus on sprayer calibration and maintenance and corn herbicide comparisons. Visitors can also visit test plots.

For more information, contact Stoltzfus at (717) 354-1522.

Lancaster Farming
Check out our Website

www.lancasterfarming.com



STATIONARY MIXERS

NEW

Some Models Cut and Mix Hay

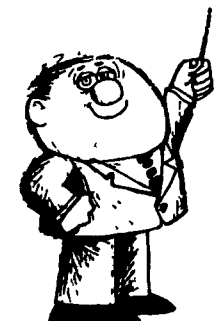
Models from 55 to 490 cu. ft. mixing capacity ...

- PROVEN RUGGED
- PROVEN EFFICIENT
- PROVEN ECONOMICAL

Building T.M.R. Mixers Since 1981

RISSLER
MIXERS & FEEDERS

800-436-5623
717-484-0551

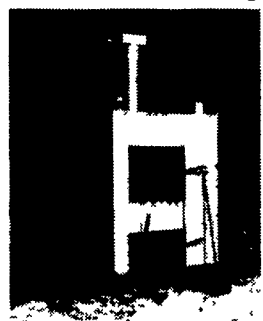


A lesson well learned...

Lancaster Farming's classified ads get results!

Mahoning Outdoor Furnaces

Cut Heating Cost With An Outdoor Furnace



An Efficient Solution To All Your Heating Needs!

Standard Models Burn Wood, Coal
Multi-Fuel Models Burn Wood, Coal, Oil, Propane, Gas or Waste Oil
"Adapts To All Existing Systems"

www.mahoningoutdoorfurnace.com

The Natural Way To Heat!
Dealerships Available in Some Areas.

800-692-5200

Can You Afford To Waste Hay?

Try the

BALE BOSS Hay Saver



Quality Barn Equipment at Economical Prices

STEIN-WAY
Barn Equipment

- ◆ Free Stalls
- ◆ Sand Traps™
- ◆ Self-locks
- ◆ Waterers
- ◆ Gates
- ◆ Bale Boss Hay Savers

Call: Joe Speicher

175 North Imler Valley Rd
Imler, PA 16655

(814) 276-3304

1-888-605-2422

POWER STROKE FUEL INJECTORS "HEUI Injection System"

Ford 7.3L Trucks * IH DT-466 * T-444E * Caterpillar

Miller Diesel, Inc.

Offers Complete Service, Rebuilding & Exchange

POWER STROKE INJECTORS

- ◆ On Site Rebuilding
- ◆ Exchange in Stock
- ◆ Testing & Calibration
- ◆ On Vehicle Diagnosis
- ◆ Removal & Installation
- ◆ Excellent Pricing - \$\$ Save \$\$
- ◆ Quick Turn Around Time
- ◆ Free Pick up & Delivery (100 Mile Radius Hbg.) OR Daily UPS



MILLER DIESEL, INC.
FUEL INJECTION & TURBO SPECIALIST

6030 JONESTOWN ROAD, HARRISBURG, PA 17112
(717) 545-5931 1-800-296-5931

EXPERIENCE, TRAINING & KNOWLEDGE SINCE 1957