

Township Still Hopes To Tap Farm's Water

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plan to continue working at the test well it had drilled and then abandoned this spring on his dairy farm, home to the high quality 65-cow herd known as Cocalico Holsteins.

Zimmerman owns about 50 acres of cropland, plus pasture and land on which the buildings are situated. His son, Paul Jr., manages the cow herd.

Drillers had arrived on the farm May 27 and pulled out in early June.

Zimmerman said testing revealed a groundwater flow of 12 gallons per minute, much less than the 100-gallon range preferred for municipal use.

At the time, Eugene Heft, chairman of the East Cocalico Water and Sewer Authority, said the flow from the limestone aquifer was somewhat greater, but not enough to justify the expense of continuing.

But the township's geologist and engineers have recommended more testing in order to get a better assessment of the potential water supply, according to Heft.

In early September, they plan to use an "airlift procedure" as part of the ongoing study, Heft said.

Heft said he is not familiar with how the airlift procedure works, but that it is meant to help avoid assessment problems caused by "cave-ins" that occurred during the drilling.

The method is not designed to secure more water, but only allow more accurate readings of the water flow, according to Heft. The geologist and engineers believe all three wells have greater flow potential than prior tests showed, he said.

The drilling on Zimmerman's property was controversial from the start, in large part because the farm is included in 500 acres of prime farmland in the township for which landowners had applied for ag security protection in September 2000.

According to John Bell, attorney with the Pennsylvania Farm

Bureau, the ag security area is valid under the law because township officials failed to act on the application within the allotted time of 180 days after the landowners filed it.

The drilling site is located in an alfalfa field near the center of Zimmerman's farm. If the township decides to use the well as a municipal water source, 10-12 acres surrounding the wellhead would be banned from normal farming practices.

"It would just demolish the value of the farm," Zimmerman said.

Neighbors and numerous other people raised their voices against the drilling operation. Zimmerman suspects township officials temporarily pulled out to appease critics.

"They wanted to quiet people up," he said.

After the drilling rig left the property, Zimmerman said he sent the township a bill for damages and lost alfalfa production on about two acres. As of this week, he hadn't received any compensation, he said.

"The whole upper end of the field is full of ruts you can hardly drive over with a baler and wagon full of bales," he said.

Beside the test well on Zimmerman's farm, the airlift method will also be performed on test wells on two other properties in the township not located in an ag security area.

According to Heft, the three wells were drilled in hopes of securing a "safe yield" of water for existing township interests as well as future development.

The sites were determined through the use of sophisticated technology, including geographic information system mapping (GIS).

Heft said the Zimmerman case is the first instance of eminent domain he's aware of in East Cocalico Township.

"We're allowed to do research drilling through eminent domain," he said this spring. "If there's water there, we need to negotiate with the landowners."

Groups Partner To Finalize National Animal ID Plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A national animal identification plan is being developed to help protect American animal agriculture.

State animal health officials, livestock industry groups and the federal government are working together to finalize the plan. They hope to have Phase One of the plan, Premises ID, in place by July 2004.

This phase would require that standardized premises identification numbers be established for all production operations, markets, assembly points, exhibitions and processing plants.

Once the Premises ID systems are in place, the plan will proceed to Phase Two, which calls for individual identification for cattle in commerce. Phase two would require all other food animal and livestock species that enter commerce to be identified through individual or group/lot identification.

Phase Two would be in place by the beginning of 2006. The goal is to develop a national standardized program that has the capability to identify all premises and animals that had direct contact with a foreign animal disease within 48 hours of its discovery. This goal may require that certain data be housed in a central database.

States, industry and the USDA have been working in partnership on the plan through the National Animal Identification Development Team. The team, which includes a steering committee and five working groups, has produced a draft plan with the working name of the U.S. Animal

Identification Plan (USAIP). It carries the tagline Protecting American Animal Agriculture.

The development of a national identification plan has been worked on for several years, but the recent BSE experience in Canada has reinforced the need for the U.S. to introduce a national plan as soon as practicably possible, said Neil Hamerschmidt, Chief Operating Officer of the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium and co-chair of the development teams steering committee.

A national plan which IDs all food animals and livestock will allow the U.S. to identify any animals exposed to disease and will facilitate stopping the spread of that disease, said Glenn Slack, president and CEO of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA). This will help protect American animal agriculture from the devastating effects that might occur in the event of a case of BSE, foot and mouth disease or other deleterious diseases ever being discovered in the U.S.

The draft plan draws on existing voluntary and compulsory animal identification programs currently in place in the U.S. and coordinates these into a truly national program for the first time. Details are still to be finalized, but the development team expects to complete its work within the next 60 days. It is expected that the plan will then be open to review and comment by industry stakeholders.

Without identification, our livestock industries would be vulnerable to any disease situation that required rapid tracking of

animal movement, said Hamerschmidt.

The draft plan follows 18 months of intensive work by states, industry and USDA. In early 2002, NIAAs Animal Identification and Information System Committee organized an NIAA task force comprised of approximately 100 representatives of more than 30 stakeholder groups.

After months of work, the task force produced the National Identification Work Plan (NIWP). That plan was presented at the NIAA ID/INFO EXPO in Chicago in July 2002. The final draft of the NIWP was then presented to the U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) at its annual meeting in October 2002.

The USAHA accepted the plan with a resolution calling for USDA, APHIS, VS, to establish a National Animal Identification Team composed of state, industry and federal partners to further develop a national plan, using the NIWP as a guide.

With this charge, APHIS, VS identified key industry leaders to serve as the teams Steering Committee. These steering committee members then selected members of five working groups, including Communication, Transition, Standards, Governance and Information Technology.

An official Website (www.U-SAIP.info) containing details of the draft plan, background information, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about the proposed plan and provision for comments about the plan is currently under construction.

17 Soybean Producers Appointed To Board

WASHINGTON, D. C. — Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman has announced 17 appointments to the United Soybean Board. All appointees will serve 3 year terms beginning December 2003.

Appointed members representing soybean producers by state are: David L. Feilke, Arkansas; Billy W. Sellers, Georgia; Kenneth L. Dalenberg, Illinois; Karen L. Fear,

Indiana; Curtis A. Raasch, Iowa; Benny F. Cooper, Kentucky; Ike P. Boudreaux, Louisiana; Douglas A. Proehl, Minnesota; Terry L. Ecker, Missouri; Norman L. Husa, Nebraska; Richard J. Stern, Jr., New Jersey; Floyd L. Peed, North Carolina; Vanessa A. Kummer, North Dakota; Thomas F. Brown, Ohio; Michael H. Gerhart, Pennsylvania; George L. Christensen, South Dakota; and R. Bruce Johnson, Vir-

ginia.

The 62 member Board is authorized by the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act. USDA selected the appointees from soybean producers nominated by the Qualified State Soybean Board. The mandatory program is funded at the rate of one-half of one percent of the net market price of the soybeans purchased.

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