

Preservation Leaders Laud Vote

RYAN ROBINSON
Special To Lancaster Farming

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — County officials and agricultural preservation leaders are lauding the Lancaster County Commissioners' denial of a land-swap deal as a victory for the farmland preservation program.

The commissioners voted unanimously to deny Ephrata Area School District's proposal to use 1.4 acres of the preserved David Lauver farm along Meadow Valley Road in Ephrata Township for a secondary access drive for a planned elementary school.

While preservationists applauded the decision, the president of the Ephrata Area School Board called it a "slap in the face" to everyone from the school, Ephrata Township and Ephrata Borough who spent the last three to four years carefully planning the school.

"This has become a pure political football," said William Funk. "I personally feel that this has become such an obvious political issue that has nothing to do with educating children or the needs of addressing our growth."

Preservation officials see it differently. The importance the decision has to the farmland preservation effort can not be overstated, said Heidi Schellenger of the Lancaster Farmland Trust. "My board members told me this issue was a hill to die on," Schellenger said.

The commissioners demonstrated that safety is the only thing that would justify lifting an easement on preserved farmland, and even that bar is set very high, Schellenger said.

Funk disagreed sharply. "What it does do is cater to the narrow self-interests of the almost fanatical preservationists," Funk said. "We have a supreme disappointment with the way this went."

The school district proposed preserving 2.8 acres from a nearby farm in exchange for using the slice of preserved ground. "Our proposal was going to increase the amount of preserved land when we were done, slightly altering the boundary of preserved land," Funk said. "If (commissioners) truly cared about preserving land in the county, they would have voted for it." He also said he can't see how any dangerous precedent would be set in the case, as preservationists and two of the county commissioners have argued.

"The law currently allows preserved farmland to be crossed for cellular towers," Funk said. "The only precedent set here would be that any time a school district is in need of having a safe access to a public road, it can. We are not Wal-Mart. We are not a developer."

Commissioner Pete Shaub — who voted with fellow commissioners Paul Thibault and Ron Ford to block the school district's plan — disagreed with Funk. "Our ruling yesterday does indicate that we do take ag preservation seriously," Shaub said. "When we commit to preserving for perpetuity, then that's what it means, unless it is essential that a change be made."

He said that granting the school's right of way would jeopardize the trust and integrity of the number-one county farmland preservation program in the country. Gene Garber, president of the county's Agricultural Preserve Board, said before the vote that approving the access drive plan would break the county's "solemn promise" to Elam Lauver, who donated the land's easement in 1984. That would set a "terrible, terrible precedent" for farmland preservation, he said.

Agricultural Preserve Board Director Rich Doenges, speaking before the vote, said farmland preservation would be weakened, even if a legal precedent wasn't set. "Beyond the reality of the facts, it is important how this would be perceived by the public," Doenges said. All three commissioners thought the school district failed to prove that the access was the only safe alternative for the Lincoln Elementary School planned in Ephrata Township. The commissioners' careful consideration of the request and high bar set for safety impressed Schellenger.

"I was going to be very upset if they allowed this access drive and it wasn't a safety issue," she said. "The two easements that have been amended (in the past) make a nice precedent for safety. They weren't amended for convenience. I definitely think there would have been that perception in this case."

So where does Wednesday's ruling leave the school district, which desperately needs a new school to house its growing number of students? Funk said officials are eyeing several other routes as a possible secondary access drive to the school.

— From the Lancaster New Era

East Coast and North Central Veal Report

Des Moines, Iowa
October 1, 2003
Supplied By USDA

CARLOT VEAL CARCASS REPORT. Compared to trading last week: Northeast special fed veal weak to lower at 255.00-285.00, average 266.10. Demand moderate on light offerings. North Central hide-on lower at 240.00-245.00, average 242.98. Demand moderate on light offerings. Undertone weak to lower.

VEAL CARCASS, SPECIAL FED, HOT BASIS, FOB PRODUCTION POINTS. Northeast 840 head Hide-Off, 215-275 lbs; 280.00-285.00 North Central 470 head Hide-On, 240-300 lbs 240-245.00.

CONTRACT INFORMATION. Hot Basis, Hide-Off — (As of October 1, 2003) — Contract calves slaughtered this week. 195,000-285,000, mostly 205,000-245,000. Packers base market 225,000-235,000. Future Contracts offered: Firm Bottom 205,000-215,000, Firm Top 225,000-235,000, Firm Bottom/Open Top 205,000, Firm Bottom 210,000, Split Half Top 225,000 Fixed 215,000.

• North Central - OH, IN, IL, MI & WI.
• Northeast - MA, MD, PA, NY, NJ, DE, CT & VT.

WEEKLY DISTRIBUTIVE, LESS THAN CARLOT, EAST COAST AREA VEAL CUTS TRADE, SPECIAL FED: Market for Tuesday, Sept. 23 — Distributive special fed veal cuts trading weak to lower on loin, rib and leg cuts. Other cuts steady to steady to weak. Movement slow to moderate, demand light to moderate on light to moderate offerings.

Prices per CWT: Carcass, hide off 200-250 lb 290-360.00, Foresaddles 85-110 lb 240-265.00; K kosher Foresaddles 90-110 lb 250-315.00; Hind-saddles 85-115 lb 390-440.00; Loins, regular 17-25 lb 390-440.00; Loins, 4x4 trmd 12-18 lb 750-825.00; Hotel Racks, 8 rib 15-21 lb 650-750.00, 7 rib 14-20 lb 600-800.00, 6 rib 13-17 lb 800.00-925.00; Chuck, square cut 36-47 lb 145-175.00, Shoulder, full 14-20 lb 185.00-215.00; Legs, double 70-90 lb 395-440.00, TBS 3-piece 24-32 lb 795-950.00, BHS heel-off 27-35 lb 690-800.00; Top Round, trmd, cap-off 8-10 lb 1250-1450.00; Breast 10-12 lb 80-115.00; Necks, bone-in 24-28 lb 145-185.00; Stew Meat, regular 250-325.00; Boneless Trimmings 75-80% lean 75-95.00, Heavy Nature Green Hides, per piece 36-41.00.

Weekly Meat Production Under Federal Inspection

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 26 — (USDA-NASS) — Total red meat production under federal inspection for the week ending Saturday, Sept. 27, was estimated at 903.2 million lbs., according to the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. This was 3.7 percent lower than a week ago and 4.1 percent lower than a year ago. Cumulative meat production for the year to date was 0.4 percent lower compared to the previous year.

MEAT PRODUCTION (million pounds) (excludes condemned)

Week Ending (1)	Beef	Calf/Veal	Pork (2)	Lamb/Mutton	Totals (3)
27-Sep-03	507.7	3.5	388.2	3.8	903.2
20-Sep-03	546.4	3.2	384.3	3.9	937.8
Change	-7.1%	9.4%	1.0%	-2.6%	-3.7%
28-Sep-02	541.5	3.9	392.7	4.1	942.2
Change	-6.2%	-10.3%	-1.1%	-7.3%	-4.1%
2003 YTD	19,860.8	135.6	14,127.5	139.6	34,263.5
2002 YTD	19,942.2	137.0	14,157.5	153.7	34,390.4
Change	-0.4%	-1.0%	-0.2%	-9.2%	-0.4%

1- Previous week estimates may be revised. Year ago data are actuals.
2- Excludes lard.
3- Totals may not add due to rounding. 2003 totals are subject to revision.

LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER (head)

Week Ending	Cattle	Calves/Vealers	Hogs	Sheep/Lambs
27-Sep-03	681,000	19,000	1,999,000	57,000
20-Sep-03	733,000	18,000	1,981,000	60,000
Change	-7.1%	5.6%	0.9%	-5.0%
28-Sep-02	701,000	21,000	2,028,000	63,000
Change	-2.9%	-9.5%	-1.4%	-9.5%
2003 YTD	26,601,000	730,000	71,543,000	2,082,000
2002 YTD	26,260,000	733,000	72,160,000	2,278,000
Change	1.3%	-0.4%	-0.9%	-8.6%

AVERAGE WEIGHTS (lbs.)

Week Ending	LIVE CATTLE	Calves/Vealers	Hogs	Sheep/Lamb
27-Sep-03	Estimate 1229	301	261	132
20-Sep-03	Estimate 1230	295	261	131
28-Sep-02	Actual 1271	311	262	130
DRESSED				
27-Sep-03	Estimate 749	186	195	67
20-Sep-03	Estimate 747	181	195	66
28-Sep-02	Actual 777	191	195	65

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SLAUGHTERED BY CLASS

Wk Ending	CATTLE				HOGS		
	Steers	Heifers	Cows	Bull/Stags	Barrows/Gilts	Sows	Boars/Stags
13-Aug-03	49.3%	33.1%	15.7%	1.9%	96.4%	3.3%	0.3%
14-Aug-02	50.5%	31.3%	16.4%	1.8%	96.9%	2.9%	0.2%

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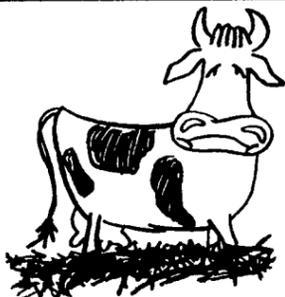
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