

Water Planning Act Launched

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To get a better picture of the state's water needs and to avoid future fights over water, secretaries Wolff and McGinty urged all farmers to register their water — even those using less than 10,000 gallons per day.

"This is about finding out which areas have critical water needs so we can make sure we have the best system in place for resource management and conservation," Wolff said.

"Act 220 will certainly benefit farmers in case a shortage of water occurs," he said. "Many people might think the drought is over with all the rains we've had this past year, but if you look at the past 10 years, we're in a water deficit."

McGinty said DEP will use Act 220 for water resources planning only. The Act does not establish water allocation or with-

drawal requirements, and does not give DEP authority to regulate, control, or require permits for water withdrawal. It also prohibits any requirements for metering homeowner wells.

According to McGinty, local officials will be able to use the information gathered under Act 220 to consider how much water is being used and how much is still available, and limit development before water use and water quality conflicts arise.

"When that tug and pull over water resources comes to push and shove — and it will," McGinty said, "... water will be safeguarded for the use of agriculture."

Stan Brown first came to the farm here in 1948. Brown, his wife Nona, and their son Scott and his family own and manage the orchard and farm market. They grow about 125 acres of tree fruits and 50 acres of other

produce, including sweet corn and pumpkins. Neighboring farmers provide much of the produce sold in the store.

Beside homegrown fruit and local produce, the diversified market also includes a large baked goods section, a deli, gift shop, and children's section.

Stan said the operation draws water from two spring- and run-off-fed ponds for some irrigation purposes, but the supply is limited.

"We cannot irrigate most of our lands," he said.

This year's plentiful rainfall helped produce a crop of big, solid apples.

"That's what the water did," Brown said of the good crop. The apples weathered Tropical Storm Isabel fairly well, though many leaning trees need to be straightened from the effect of the storm winds.

"Working together, we can preserve this precious commodity (water) for generations to come," Brown said, speaking in support of Act 220.

Ag organizations supporting Act 220 include the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, PennAg Industries, Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, Pennsylvania Farmers Union, Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association, Pennsylvania Grange, and Wenger Feeds.

A statewide water resources committee has been created under Act 220 to oversee the water plan. The Act also creates six regional committees, made up of business, agriculture, local government, and environmental representatives.

According to a DEP fact sheet, the state's water plan had not been updated for more than 25 years prior to



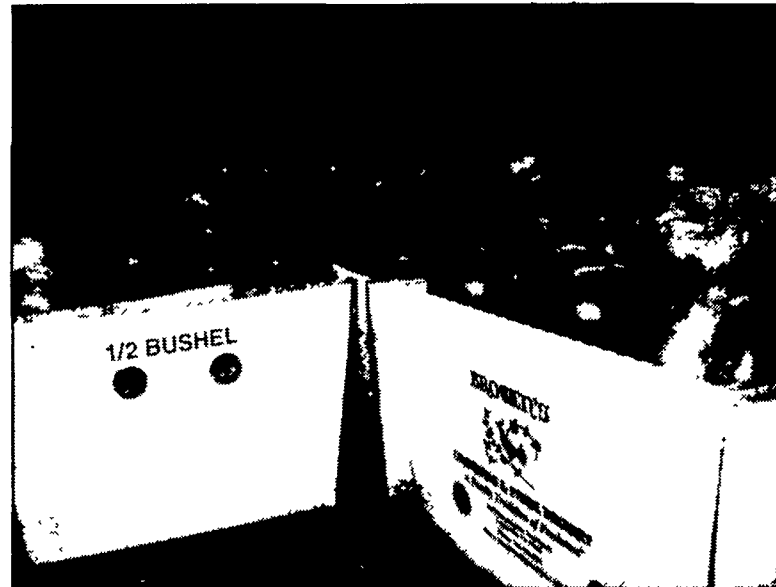
Leaders of Pennsylvania's departments of agriculture and environmental protection meet at Brown's Orchard and Farm Market this week to help launch a new water plan for the state. Pictured here at wall mural in the store are, from left, Dennis Wolff, ag secretary; Stan Brown; and Kathleen McGinty, DEP secretary. Photos by Dave LeFever

Act 220. The old plan fails to identify which areas have critical water needs, according to the fact sheet.

Since 1900, residential use of water has increased from 5 gallons to 62 gallons per person per day. DEP estimates total water

use in Pennsylvania is about 10 billion gallons per day.

For more information, or to download registration forms, visit the Pennsylvania PowerPort at www.state.pa.us, keyword: "DEP Water Management."



"That's what the water did." This year's plentiful rainfall helped produce a crop of big, solid apples at Brown's Orchard and Farm Market.

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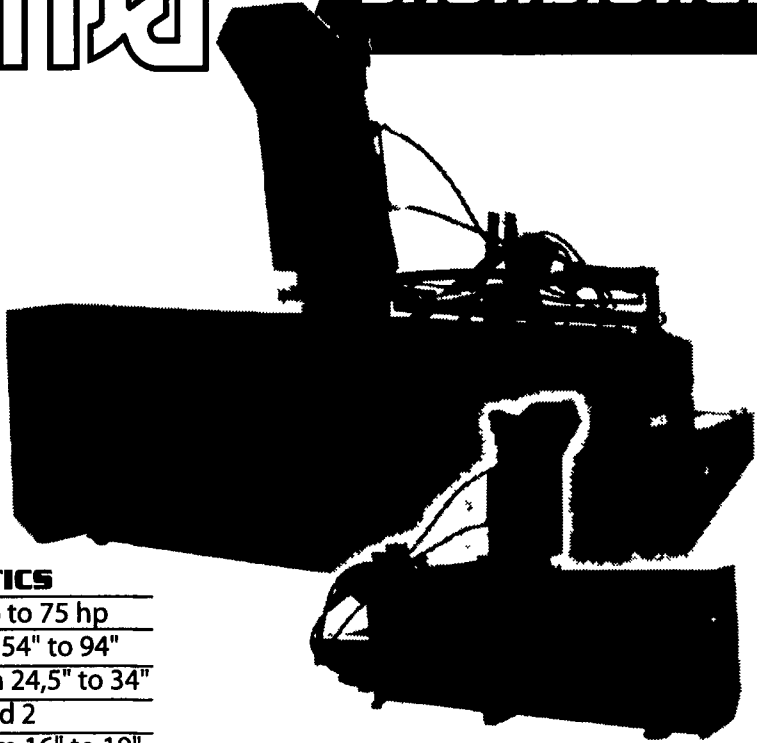
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