

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE BOARDS of MICHIGAN

FARMLAND PROTECTION PROGRAM

Scott Evertt: Regional Director American Farmland Trust, introduced the speakers

Bob Wagner: National Director Field Programs & Policy Development American Farmland Trust. He presented the program provisions as reported out by the Senate Agriculture Committee and a summary of the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program provisions of H.R.2419 as passed by the House. Most aspects differ including eligibility, purpose, and program specifics. The conclusion determined that between the two bills there are some excellent ideas. The best of each bill should be combined to have a solid bill.

Rich Harlow: Manager of Michigan Department of Agriculture Farmland & Open Space Preservation Program. He presented the status of preserved farm land in Michigan. There are 41,884 PA116 with 3.3 million acres protected. The MDA sees 350 to 400 new applications each year and 90% of those enrolled renew their contracts.

Bob Kennedy: General Manager Auburn Bean & Grain. He addressed the ethanol issues. There are five plants in the state, four are 50MG facilities and one is 110MG facility. A byproduct called DDGS is a high protein product used in cattle and fowl feeds. His studies determined that there is plenty of corn produced to meet the supply/demand for cattle & fowl feed, ethanol production, and foreign exportation. He touched on new technologies which enhance growth, drying and processing.

Rich VanderVeen: President of Mackinaw Power. He led the team to develop and finance the first privately owned wind power plant. He discussed the concerns of zoning, permitting, and existing utilities. He gave a brief explanation on how wind generators work. Michigan Sustainable Energy Coalition is working to get laws passed for wind farms. This type of farming can be done on PA116 farms. Each wind turbine requires 1/8 of an acre and a typical lease provides a land owner with 3% to 4% of the gross proceeds.

Participants of events/activities associated with local county programs reported on their annual progress.

BREAK

Mr. Ralph Robertson of Carroll County, Maryland is Manager of Ag Lands Preservation Program. He presented the history of land preservation and the goals to make a program work. Education of every citizen, sharing of ideas, pulling economics into the picture all help to move the process forward. Main objectives are to keep the land base and protect the water. In 1973 county commissioners adopted a master plan to encourage development of town centers, balanced with control of "sprawl". He stated strong leadership, program

vision, public involvement, zoning commitments, steady source of income, and fair land owner compensation are needed for success.

After the dinner break, Mr. Gene Garber of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Chair of Ag Preserve Board gave a presentation on how their program was established. In 1980 the county commissioners were badgered into funding "Preservation of Farm Lands". By 1985, \$350,000 had been allocated and some land was donated by utility companies. In 1988 the state put a \$100 million bond issue on the ballot and it passed. His recommendations include: Educate people - we can't squander our land. We don't need to stop development; we just need to put it in pre-planned areas. Ag people need to be included in all development meetings, land usage meetings and transfer of development rights, as well as rezoning. Funding must be secured. Pa. receives two cents from every pack of cigarettes sold and a tipping fee is collected on all trash going into land fills. These funds are designated for land preservation. It is important to monitor the program annually.

Summary of meeting attended on Wednesday, December 12, 2007
Submitted by Barbara Potter