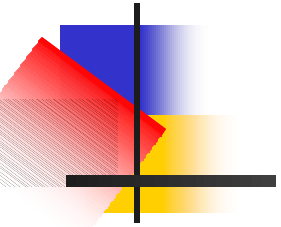


# Extension's Role in Land Use Issues



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Tom Ilvento

Department of  
Food and Resource Economics





# Hasn't the Northeast already solved this problem?

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- The Northeast, particularly Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey has been seen as leaders in land use issues and farmland preservation
- And yet...



# Haven't we solved this problem?

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- Land use issues aren't new
  - The history of the U.S. is about land
  - The Country Life Commission of 1908 focused on rural to urban migration
  - The dust bowl of the 1930s caused us to focus on land conservation
  - After WWII we saw rapid suburbanization
  - Zoning issues emerged in the 1950s and 60s
  - Issues over the rights of private ownership versus public rights has emerged in the 1980s and 90s



# From my perspective

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- There isn't an answer or the answer!
- We won't agree
- And in the public policy arena – that's ok



# My perspective

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- We rarely “solve” social issues or problems
- We can address issues or fail to address them
- In a public policy framework, we make decisions about which direction to go
  - Either explicitly or implicitly
  - Hopefully based on good information and helpful models
- We won't all agree on an answer, but we can agree on a process to come to a decision.
- My bias is that the process ought to involve citizens



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**The process is  
important!**



# Extension and the Land Grant University has a role to play in land use issues

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- Extension Roles:
  - Educators
  - Facilitators in the process
  - Applied research for problem solving
- Land use also provides an excellent opportunity for us to combine Research, Extension, and Teaching



# Land Use Conflict: What are we talking about?

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- A range of issues
  - Loss of farmland
  - Loss of open space
  - Sprawl
  - Planning and Zoning
  - The taking of property rights
  - Cost of services – sewer, education, transportation
  - Environmental degradation
  - Conflicts between neighbors
  - Assistance in decision-making by landowners and farmers



# An import question to ask ourselves:

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- What will be our role in land use conflict?
  - Indifferent
  - Observer/Recorder
  - Involvement
    - Educator
    - Facilitator
    - Researcher
  - Advocate



**More involvement**

**More resources**

**More potential impact**



# The Ghostbuster Question

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- Are we a player in the debate within our states?
  - When a meeting is called or a task force formed, are we included?
  - To our publics turn to us for information or perspective?



# As Educators

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- **Publications and Fact Sheets**

- *Land Use Alternatives in the Northeast*, publication from early 1990s
- Involved the following states in the project
  - Connecticut
  - Delaware
  - Maryland
  - New Jersey
  - New York
  - Rhode Island
  - Vermont



# *Land Use Alternatives in the Northeast,* Topics

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- Water and Land, : the Resource Connection
- Zoning and Subdivision for the Rural Urban Fringe Community
- Open Space Issues
- Coastal Land Use Issues
- Community Growth Management
- Developing a Growth Management Program
- Innovative Techniques for Farmland Retention



# As Educators

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- **Other examples of publications:**
  - Strategies for Agricultural Land Preservation – PDR and TDR
  - Trends in agriculture and loss of farmland
  - Agricultural zoning
  - Good Neighbor Relations
  - Directory of Expertise
  - Country Living: A Homeowner's Guide
  - Estate Planning and Agricultural Easements
  - Land Use at the Rural-Urban Fringe



# Publication Examples

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- University of Maryland
  - *Transferable Development Rights: Are They a Step in the Direction of Better Land Use Management?*
  - *Farmland Preservation An Estate Planning Tool* (Lori Lynch)
- The Pennsylvania State University
  - *Finding the Common Ground: Community Conflicts Over Agriculture, Land Use, and Natural Resources* (Tim Kelsey and Charles Abdalla)
  - *Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements* (Stan Lembeck)



# As Educators

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- **Workshops and Training**

- For Extension Personnel – Northeast Public Policy Committee in 1999 in Pennsylvania and Rhode Island
- Delmarva Farmland Protection Training -
  - American Farmland Trust
  - University of Maryland
  - University of Delaware

# The Delmarva Peninsula Farmland Protection Training Workshop

- The workshops are designed to help participants provide high quality information on farmland protection and land use issues to their communities.
- Four workshops in Maryland and Delaware





# Agenda

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- **SESSION #1- WHAT IS THE PROBLEM/WHY DOES THIS MATTER/WHAT IS OUR ROLE?**
  - National perspective on the loss of farmland
  - Economic, social and environmental benefits of agriculture to the Delmarva Peninsula
  - Problems currently faced in the region
  - Available statistical sources/ data on demographic and
    - land use issues
  - Small group discussion- Roles of participants in "what is the problem and why does this matter?"



# Agenda

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- **SESSION #2- HOW DO WE PROTECT FARMLAND AND WHAT IS OUR ROLE?**
  - Overview of farmland protection tools
  - Comprehensive land use planning and growth management
  - Local farmland protection initiatives
  - Small group discussion- Roles of participants in farmland protection
  - Wrap up and closing comments

# The Delmarva Peninsula Farmland Protection Training Workshop

- Provided participants with:
  - A look at changes in land use
  - Gauging public attitudes and facilitate community discussion.
  - Developing a comprehensive land use plan that includes agriculture
  - Analysis of land use and farmland protection strategies and techniques.
  - Small group discussion on the roles participants may play





# As Facilitators

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- Helping people work through the issues through deliberative discussions, issue gatherings, and
  - *Land Use Conflict: When City and Country Clash* - national booklet
  - *Losing Ground: What Will We Do About Delaware's Changing Landscape?*



# As Facilitators

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- Specific Leadership Programs
  - Water Resource Leadership Initiative at the University of Maryland – Phil Favero
  - Natural Resources Leadership Institute at North Carolina State University – Steve Smutko
- Leadership Programs in General
- Specialized Training in Conflict
  - *Turning Lemons into Lemonade: Public Conflict Resolution* - Ronald J. Hustedde, Steve Smutko, and Jarad J. Kapsa



# As Facilitators

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- Training for Government Agency Officials in dealing with the public
  - Bill McGowan and Maria Pippidas of Delaware Cooperative Extension
- Future effort– similar training for community groups to be more effective in the policy process



# As Facilitators

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- Some Extension specialists have moved towards a role of mediator, helping participants in a dispute to reach a settlement



# As Applied Research

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- Surveys of general population and landowners
  - *Juniata County: Today and Tomorrow* (Walt Whitmer, Penn State University)
  - *Landowners Speak Out! Results of a Survey of Landowners in New Castle County* (Tom Ivento, University of Delaware)
- Evaluations of State and County Preservation Programs
- Measuring Costs and Benefits of alternative land use strategies



# Public Conversations and Civic Involvement

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*The Cooperative Extension Service at land-grant universities can continue to be an effective mechanism for civic development, especially for rural citizens. The Cooperative Extension Service can use its leadership as a flagship institution to be a catalyst for fostering opportunities for civic involvement in community decision-making.*

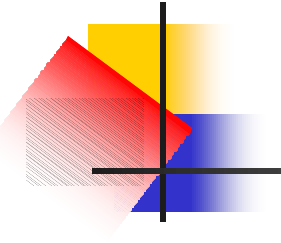
Betty King and Ron Hustedde, Southern Rural Development Center, No. 19, May 2001



# What is a public conversation?

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- A Public Conversations is a strategy to get people talking about important policy issues.
- The model was developed by the Kettering Foundation as a way to encourage citizen involvement in critical issues.
- The strategy is to build a deliberative discussion about what *we ought to do* about public issues.
- This approach differs from a debate in that participants are asked to weigh carefully the viewpoint of others and talk through the conflicting emotions that often arise in public discussions.



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**Public conversations  
don't have to lead to  
decisions!**



# Basic steps

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- A committee frames several choices
- The choices are based on previous research, expert testimony, and experiences elsewhere.
- The number of choices are limited
- A short issue brief is written which includes a discussion of each choice



# National Booklet

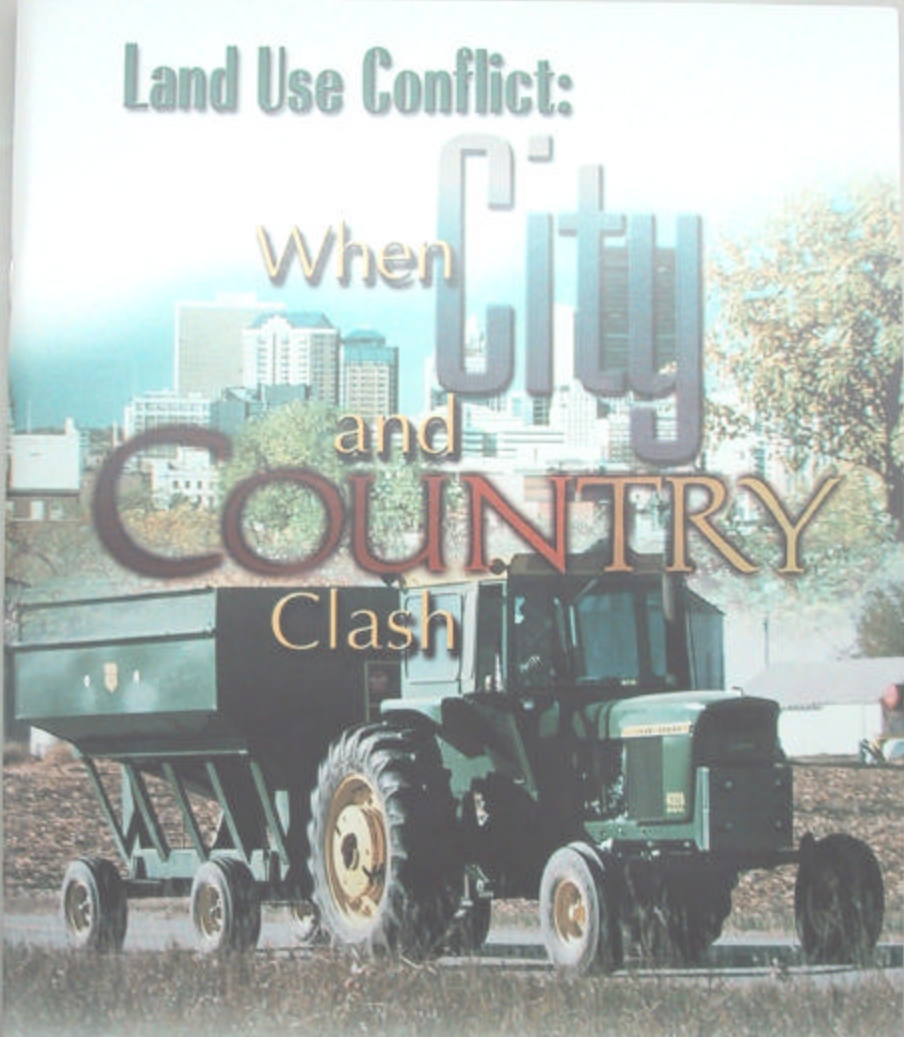
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- **Land Use Conflict: When City and Country Clash**
  - National Public Policy Education Committee in cooperation with the Farm Foundation
  - The focus is on urban sprawl
  - But it also covers
    - Loss of farmland
    - Incompatible uses
    - Property rights



# Land Use Conflict:

# When City and COUNTRY Clash



A Project of the National Public Policy Education Committee in  
Cooperation with the Farm Foundation



# Four Options

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- 1. Reestablish the Free Market**
- 2. Protect Farmland and Open Space**
- 3. Redevelop Central Cities**
- 4. Manage Growth on the Fringe**



# Experiences of this Approach in Delaware

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- In 1996 Bill McGowan used this approach in Delaware – called **Losing Ground**
- The idea was to get people talking about land use issues
- The conversations were to be
  - Deliberate
  - Respectful
  - Geared toward helping people understand different perspectives



# THE CHOICES FOR THE LOSING GROUND PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS

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- **Encourage Private Responsibility for Land Conservation.** Emphasizes private property rights and encourages conservation and planning through incentives and education for landowners.
- **Establish Permanent Protection for Special Lands.** Emphasizes more government involvement and regional planning to protect important lands.
- **Prevent Rural Land Conversion By Enhancing Urban Life.** This approach promotes urban development as a strategy to limit growth in rural areas.
- **Centralize Land Use Control.** Promotes the need for state and regional control of land use decisions



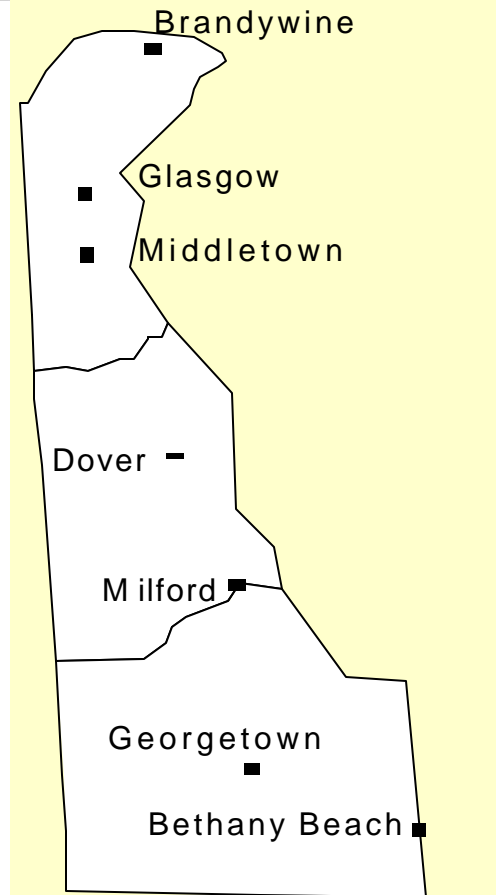
# The strategy for the discussions

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- Trained moderators, using principles developed by the Kettering Foundation's National Issue Forums, led participants.
  - Ground rules for discussion
  - Focus on deliberative discussion rather than debate
  - Listening to the viewpoints of others
  - Respect for others.
- A recorder at each session used flip charts to record comments and display a "group memory" of ideas.
- The seven public conversations generally took about 2 hours to complete.

# Seven meetings were held in January 1996

- Seven public conversations were held throughout Delaware in public schools, community rooms, and libraries.
- In total, 345 people participated





# Pre and Post Evaluation

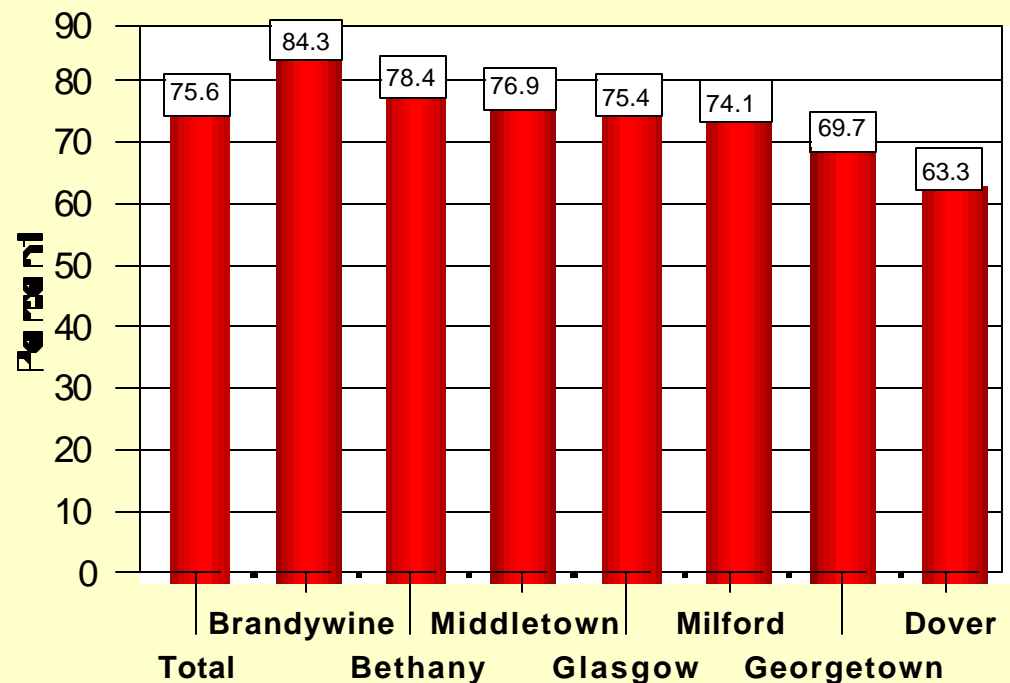
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- A pre and post questionnaire was used: 294 people (85.2%) filled out the pre survey and 262 people (75.9%) fill out the post survey.
- Participation in the meetings was voluntary and thus the results do not represent the viewpoints of all residents in Delaware.
- The responses do give a reflection of what happened at the meetings and of the interest of Delawareans.

# Most felt land use issues serious

- Over three-quarters of the participants identified land-use problems in Delaware as being "serious".

**Percent indicating Land Use Is a Serious Problem**





# What Happened During the Conversations?

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- **The discussions were lively, full of ideas, and civil.** People were able to discuss their ideas and listen to their neighbors.
- **People identified with land use issues in very personal ways.**
  - They expressed a range of concerns from their ability to continue farming, to concerns about traffic congestion, to “Did I make the right decision in moving to Delaware?”
  - Overwhelmingly, quality of life and a love for the land influenced their point of view.
  - There was a sense of urgency and an awareness that the clock is ticking.



# What Happened During the Conversations?

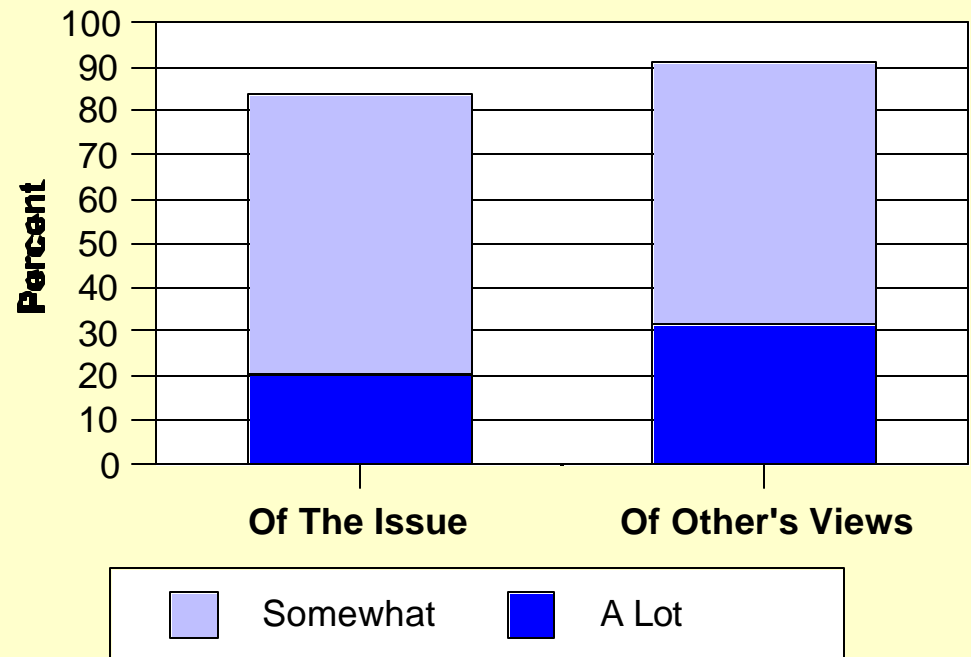
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- **Finally, there was an acknowledgment of the complexity of the issue and a willingness to learn more.**
  - Different viewpoints emerged that reflected those that owned land vs those that did not, government vs the private sector, new residents vs long-term residents, and urban vs suburban versus rural residents.
  - The public conversations enabled people to recognize these differences and discuss them in a civil manner.

# People learned from the experience

- One in five indicated that their understanding of the issue increased a lot, and another 2/3 indicated their understanding increased somewhat.
- Nearly 1/3 indicated their understanding of other people's views increased a lot, while another 59% indicated it increased somewhat.

## How Much Understanding of Land Use Issues Changed





# Final Points

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- Land use issues are critical to many of our states and communities
- The Northeast has a wealth of experience to draw upon
- We have provided leadership to the rest of the country – we can do more
- This is a great opportunity to link research, teaching, and Extension across several disciplines and issue areas