

# PFA Charges McHale's Programs Are Destroying Pa. Agriculture

The following statement was adopted January 20 by the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, the farmer organization which has over 1,000 members in Lancaster County and 14,000 in Pennsylvania:

PFA has been patient — maybe, too patient — as many respected agricultural institutions have fallen victim to the blows from the political ax of Agricultural Secretary Jim McHale.

Early in the birth of this Administration, the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association met with Shapp officials, including

Secretary McHale, to discuss the future of agriculture in the Keystone State. We explained to them how PFA's policy is adopted, and briefly discussed our policies.

We explained that if our policy agrees on any given proposal put forth by the Administration, PFA would support it 100 per cent. But, if our policy differs, we could take the role of the loyal opposition.

We, also explained that when official goals did not meet with PFA policy objectives, PFA would speak out. We believe that it is time to speak out on the conduct of the Secretary of Agriculture, and his apparent

wholesale assault against agriculture in Pennsylvania.

**The Beginning—Item No. 1**  
Secretary McHale decided to hold bi-weekly breakfast meetings with farm organizations and department officials. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss proposed legislation and other agricultural programs. PFA, along with other farm organizations, knew these meetings could be beneficial to agriculture and agreed to participate.

Participants in these breakfast "summits" agreed to bring all proposed legislation before the group. Not necessarily for agreement . . . just a matter of courtesy toward one another.

Mr. McHale violated this trust by initiating legislation in the General Assembly without any prior knowledge of the breakfast participants.

PFA brought this matter to the attention of Secretary McHale, and we continued to meet with the breakfast group.

introduced two organizers for the National Farmers Union. The two organizers presented "a sales pitch" to the group of farmers, invited by the Secretary of Agriculture. Membership applications, or cards were handed out to the audience.

Secretary McHale denied any knowledge of this event taking place, although he had personally greeted them and his deputy introduced them.

**Research Funds—Item No. 3**  
The Agricultural Research Funds Advisory Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Secretary of Agriculture, who is responsible for the funds generated by Harness Racing. Secretary McHale "stacked" the committee, and planted a resolution permitting him to spend the funds as he deems necessary.

The committee, stacked or otherwise, has not met again

since McHale has been Secretary.

**Rural Advisory Councils—Item No. 4**

PFA informed Secretary McHale that our organization would oppose the formation of Rural Advisory Councils in the Department of Agriculture. We felt that the Department's role is regulatory by law, and not a policy development organization. We told Mr. McHale that if these Councils were formed we would disagree and so state in the public news media.

Mr. McHale decided to move forward with the formation of these councils. PFA disagreed in the public news media. Secretary McHale cancelled the breakfast meetings.

**Breakfast Summits—Item No. 5**  
PFA and other Farm organizations have continued the breakfast sessions with a per-

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**Organizational Push—Item No. 2**

When PFA met with Governor Shapp, we were assured by the Governor that advice from ALL farm organizations would be sought by the Department of Agriculture and the Administration.

Shortly, after Secretary McHale's appointment, a series of meetings were held around the state by the new secretary. At one such session in Western Pennsylvania, Secretary McHale had invited farmers for the stated purpose of surfacing agricultural problems and seeking possible solutions to pressing rural issues. Mr. McHale was the featured speaker along with other department officials, and Jim Patton, former president of the National Farmers Union.

At the close of this meeting, a Deputy Secretary of Agriculture

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