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Down-to-earth approach preferred

Shelhamer confirmed ag secretary

By DIETER KRIEG
HARRISBURG - Pennsylvania's new secretary of agriculture believes there's virtually no job too tough for an efficient farmer to tackle. That's why he has made a solid farm background one of the prerequisites necessary to work in his department. "The farmer is

very versatile, he had to be," Kent Shelhamer told Lancaster Farming in an interview on Monday. "He is ingenious and diverse, that's what I want to develop in my department." Shelhamer, who has a strong farm background himself and still operates a farm in Columbia County,

wants the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to be more responsive to farmers' needs and he says he will work diligently towards that end. Describing himself as a "mover and a shaker," the 52-year old former legislator says his office will be open to hear

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Meet Pennsylvania's new secretary of agriculture — Kent Shelhamer, a Columbia County farmer with 12 years of legislative experiences behind him. Professing a practical, grass roots, nuts-and-bolts philosophy, Shelhamer wants his

Department to be responsive to farmers' needs. His reputation as a listener and a "mover and shaker" are well known and respected. The senate confirmed him as secretary of agriculture on Monday by a 47 to 0 vote.

Family farms threatened

HARRISBURG - An Ag-Land Trust investment plan, proposed by two major financial firms, threatens the existence of family farms in America and would lead to higher consumer food prices, the Pennsylvania State Grange warned last week.

In a letter to Pennsylvania congressmen and to the United States and Pennsylvania secretaries of agriculture, J. Luther Snyder, master of the State Grange, declared that the plan would put the production of major field crops - such as corn,

soybeans, wheat and other grains - "under the control of two financial giants."

The Ag-Land Trust idea was developed by the Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Company and the brokerage firm of

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Energy crisis contemplated

By SALLY BAIR
Feature Writer
LANCASTER, Pa. - Agricultural uses of energy have been given priority in all major pieces of legislation dealing with the natural gas crisis, according to Edward Callan, Columbia Gas Transmission Company. Callan answered the question of agricultural usage at a meeting called by

16th District Congressman Robert Walker last week to discuss the area's energy goals and seek possible answers.

Commissioner Robert Bloom said that the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission "will do what we can" in meeting the needs of Pennsylvania food industries during the crisis. He was unsympathetic to

plants which had not made arrangements for a second "back-up" fuel systems as they have been told to do, but he also said he was reluctant to see milk dumped because of it.

When asked specifically if farmers would be assured of "adequate" supplies to meet their spring needs,

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Rising milk production worrisome

By DIETER KRIEG
MOUNT JOY, Pa. -- Dairy industry leaders and Pennsylvania's new secretary of agriculture, Kent Shelhamer, are expressing some concern over the trend of milk production. Inter-State Milk Producers Cooperative, which held a district meeting here on Thursday afternoon, noted

that its January 1977 supply increased by 9½ per cent over a year ago. The energy crisis was partially blamed for the predicament. As far as is known, no milk needed to be dumped, although there were some very close calls.

One situation which hung in the balance in a very precarious position was the future of milk shipped to

Dietrich's Dairy in Reading. The firm turns fluid milk into powder and came close to having its gas supplies shut off. Inter-State convinced the Public Utilities Commission to change the status for Dietrich's and the gas kept flowing. Also instrumental in saving the area's dairymen was Myers'

Metered Gas Service of Manheim which furnished emergency fuel supplies to the Reading firm. A check with Dietrich's on Thursday afternoon revealed that the crisis is over and that no such serious flare-ups are expected in the immediate future.

The burden of having too much milk on hand remains however. Concern over excessive supplies was

expressed by Dr. James Honan, general manager of Inter-State, and Daniel Martin, Manheim area dairyman who serves as vice-president of the dairy cooperative.

Joining the dairy cooperative leaders in voicing this concern was Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Kent Shelhamer, who in an interview with

Lancaster Farming on Monday said:

"I think today we are in an area of having substantial surpluses in milk, and we could see some real serious problems in the milk industry. This could precipitate some new legislation." He added that he hopes he is wrong in his assessment, but that all

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PFA works with marketing

By SALLY BAIR
Feature Writer
LANCASTER, Pa. - If you're interested in buying and eating premium Pennsylvania products, the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association has a direct marketing program made to order for you. Lancaster County Farmers' Association President, Earl Newcomer, Washington Boro R1, explains that PFA's marketing

program is organized to provide fresh, quality produce direct to consumers, both members and non-members. He says, "We pay premium price for the best quality - we don't try to meet anyone's competitive price."

According to Vaughn E. Hunter, sales director for the Pennsylvania Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association, an arm of PFA, the program started five

years ago as a fruit program, when PFA participated with the Florida Farm Bureau in shipping citrus to Pennsylvania. Eventually, Hunter said, "We developed our own label and started selling apples down there."

From this modest start, the program slowly became involved in marketing hams, mushrooms and grapes, and

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Daniel Martin



James Honan