

# Specter outlines ideas on agricultural issues

HARRISBURG — What's a Philadelphia lawyer doing out in the farmlands of Pennsylvania these days?

Arlen Specter is eyeing the state's gubernatorial spot. He traveled in the area last week, meeting with state farm organization leaders and addressing a fund-raising event at Hershey.

Specter was born in Kansas and worked on a farm there as a teenager. After marrying a Philadelphia girl, he sent up a law practice in that city. A growing interest in public service led him into the job of district attorney, the "first Republican to get elected in the city of Philadelphia in 25 years," he recalled. While holding the top legal office in the state's

largest city, Specter administered a five million dollar budget and ran an office of 160 assisting district attorneys.

During a meeting with key administrative people of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, Specter spoke to several issues of interest to the agricultural industry, second only to steel in economic importance to the state.

One overriding issue in Specter's opinion is land preservation. He sees a need to keep the agricultural community intact, not only for the material value of insured food production but also because of the moral values basically inherent to the farming population.

A solution for vanishing

farmland, says Specter's "A Platform For Pennsylvania" is the same as a solution to the problem confronting our cities: balanced growth.

He advocated expanding business and housing in the cities, where public services already exist, and would coordinate state agencies already in existence to use identical multi-county districts in long-range planning. The freedom for some necessary rural expansion would come through a system of development points.

When questioned on his possible choice for a secretary of agriculture for the Commonwealth, Specter replied that it was much too soon to begin making such decisions. However, he indicated that the office should definitely be filled by someone currently in the farming business. Assuring farm organization leaders that he would consult with them on a selection, Specter added that the present Secretary is well liked, "a rarity in the Shapp administration, where most are happy if they just haven't been indicted."

A tremendous overlap of regulatory measures is what Specter sees as the biggest headache in current migratory labor programs. His recommendations would include keeping the state out of the problem, except where absolutely necessary, and to demand high caliber people to carry out any programs kept intact.

"I hear tremendous complaints about inspectors coming into migratory situations," Specter told the farm group administrators.

Sunset legislation was termed by the gubernatorial hopeful as "an excellent idea." He believes that there are too many laws that stay

on the books forever. Instead, legislation should be periodically reviewed and automatically ended, unless found necessary after careful examination.

Restructuring of inheritance tax laws was another agriculture goal that Specter supports. To a marketing-bargaining query, Specter replied that he felt he did not have enough background on that subject to give a knowledgeable answer.

"We need some sensible standards for determining when someone is hurt," was his prompt reply to questioning about workmen's compensation insurance rates. Specter feels that the program has been abused to the point where even labor leaders are recognizing the need for overhaul. The Governor plays an important role in determining how insurance cases on medical injury may be handled, he says, because the judges making the legal decisions are often political appointees.

"Our economy has gotten out of whack, and the farther we stray from the free enterprise system, the more trouble we get in," admonished Specter as he detailed some suggestions toward solving the state's budget headaches.

One step he would suggest for cutting the eight billion dollar spending would be contracting out to private firms much of the work of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDot). Private companies, he insists, would just do a much better job of the maintenance and building work.

Claiming that "welfare is eating us up," Specter indicated that there is much fraud in the present system, some of which he has helped to expose as Philadelphia's district attorney. An enforced system of iden-



Arlen Specter considers farmland preservation to be among the most important issues facing Pennsylvania agriculture.

tification would help cut down on some of that problem, he believes.

Administrative controls over the bureaucracy is another step that Specter would recommend for state government. If elected, he would like to take one hundred people immediately out into state run offices to investigate ways of cutting back spending.

It bothers him that civil service and unionized employees can't be fired. Given the choice of either knuckling to work or leaving, he believes some of the problem workers might depart.

"It's a gigantic task," he admitted, "but possible."

Much money must be spent in Pennsylvania to get the state's economy rolling again and Specter wants to see that investment in the form of private capital, not public funds. Through the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority, he sees the government involved in business expansion only to the point of making available low-rate loan money.

Capital stock laws, he says, must also be made more fair. Today, incorporated farms pay an annual levy on their assets, while manufacturers are not required to do so.

In answer to a final question, Specter insisted that, if elected, he would do his utmost to get the death penalty reinstated in Pennsylvania as a deterrent to crimes of violence.

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