

Gasohol bill ready for Governor's signature

HARRISBURG — Senate Bill 1011, already approved by the Senate, was passed by the House on Tuesday and sent to Governor Thornburgh's office for his signature.

If it is signed into law, the bill would provide for the payment of a \$25 license fee

by farmers producing ethyl alcohol for on-farm use.

Lebanon County representative Nick Moehlmann, chairman of the finance subcommittee on gasohol, said he doesn't expect any real problem in getting Thornburgh's signature.

But he said there will be

other gasohol bills emerging in the months ahead from the legislature.

"We weren't really happy with the bill as it stood," Moehlmann said, "but it passed because there was a need for immediate action."

"Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board regulations

require any distiller of alcohol to pay \$2500 license fee. This bill will remove that restriction from farmers, but that's about all it will do," he said.

Moehlmann noted that the bill would restrict the use of gasohol to the farm where it was produced, and to the

machinery and equipment of the farmer who produced it.

Farm-grown alcohol may not be sold or given away.

Future bills will address the needs of farmers who have excess alcohol production, Moehlmann said. They will attempt to set up a legislative framework for

the selling and distribution of farm-grown fuels.

Legislators will also no doubt be taking a look at the implications of farmers who use their homegrown fuels in over-the-road vehicles without paying the liquid fuels taxes that keep those roads repaired. — DW

Appalachian apple market flush for springtime

UNIVERSITY PARK — Here's good news for local fruit growers as well as for people who enjoy eating fresh apples. A study by economists at Penn State indicates food buyers would like more fresh apples available in spring and early summer, of the quality maintained in controlled atmosphere winter storage.

Such increased availability of high quality locally grown apples will require expanded capacity for controlled atmosphere

storage, and larger marketing operations than now existing, says Milton C. Hallberg, agricultural economist at Penn State.

In recent years, about 45 percent of all apples grown in the Appalachian states have been sold on the fresh market. Normally, Hallberg noted, controlled atmosphere storage contains less than the 21 percent oxygen and more than the 0.03 percent carbon dioxide found in air.

The present marketing situation, as fruit growers in Appalachia well know, is intense competition from the states of the Pacific Northwest — Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

The Appalachian fruit belt includes the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina.

"An organized market, under a federal marketing order or by cooperatives, would have the ability to sell in large volumes and promote the product," Hallberg affirmed.

"Cooperation of growers would be needed for a consistently high quality pack of apples, especially if the fruit carries a common label and gains high level acceptance to replace apples grown elsewhere," he added.

And he indicated that growers in Washington,

Oregon, and Idaho expanded their controlled atmosphere storage capacity several years ago. Thus, they have been holding large volumes of fresh apples for sale in the east and elsewhere during the spring and summer months.

In contrast, apple growers in the rest of the country have traditionally sold fresh apples from storage during the early part of the year, a few months after harvest.

The new approach, it was pointed out, would require larger than usual volume operations at storing, packing, and marketing. Controlled atmosphere storage facilities mean large investments and large volume operations.



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