



Governor Thornburgh held his first town meeting at Lancaster's Farm and Home Center on Tuesday night. The Governor answered questions from 21 constituents. The milk security fund,

farmland preservation, and the on farm production of ethanol were among the agriculture related issues discussed.

## Governor Thornburgh addresses farm issues at town meeting

**BY DEBRA STRICKLER**  
LANCASTER — Governor Thornburgh held his first town meeting at Lancaster's Farm and Home Center on Tuesday evening. The meeting, sponsored by the League of Women Voters, was attended by over 250 people.

During the 90 minute town meeting, Thornburgh answered a variety of questions from 21 constituents.

The subject of the questions ranged from unemployment compensation to Three Mile Island.

The initial question concerned the long range plans for the use of gasohol, and the development of ethanol in the Commonwealth.

During his answer, Thornburgh announced his recent signing of the so called, "Horst Law."

This law reduced the fee for the on farm production of ethanol to a minimal \$25. Previously there had been a \$2500 fee administered.

The Governor reemphasized the importance of

reducing reliance on foreign oil and cited additional initiatives the State is taking to use Pennsylvania's enterprises to reduce dependence on foreign oil.

For example, a visit was made last month to an abandoned brewery near Pittsburgh. Consideration has been given to convert the brewery to a useful ethanol production plant.

Dan Martin, a Manheim area dairy farmer, represented the Inter-State Milk Producers Cooperative. In the Governor's third question, Martin asked for an explanation of the proposed Milk Producer's Security Fund.

It was at this point that Thornburgh called on Penrose Hallowell, the Secretary of Agriculture, to explain the details of the proposed plan.

Hallowell outlined the three basic concepts of the milk security fund proposal.

First, Hallowell emphasized the importance of all farmers having an opportunity to participate and

be protected by the milk security fund.

However, the proposal has left an option for cooperative participation. There will be a separate fund established for the cooperatives. They are to make their own decisions regarding the fund after a membership vote.

The second aspect of the proposal requires the dealers to pay one cent per hundredweight on all milk purchased in the Commonwealth.

Hallowell admits that there has been a debate between having a two cent charge levied on the dealers, and on a one cent proposal where the dealers and cooperatives each share the responsibility, each being assessed one cent per hundredweight.

The proposed fund will cover 90 per cent of any loss to the farmers; rather than the total 100 per cent coverage as expected.

Hallowell emphasized the need for promotion of Pennsylvania's milk products, thus reducing

marketing problems and the

need for a large security fund.

Thornburgh thanked Hallowell for his explanation of the proposed fund, and assured the those present that the plan will let no farmer left holding the bag for milk that has been delivered and not paid for.

Dan Martin responded to Hallowell's proposal.

"At the rate of one cent per hundredweight, it will take a while to accumulate a sufficient fund. I sure hope the bonding law will be kept enforced to cover until the fund is built up," commented Martin.

"We will be hearing more from you in the future," responded Governor Thornburgh.

In other agriculture related questions, Jesse Wood, a Lancaster County farmer, questioned the Governor concerning his efforts to preserve the family farm.

Thornburgh replied, "to preserve the family farm, you need to begin by preserving the family farmer."

He cited a variety of the state government's efforts to

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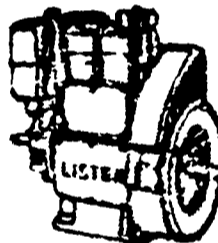
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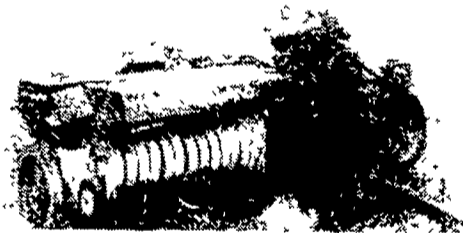
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