

PFU takes credit for Beferendum defeat

HARRISBURG — "The resounding defeat of the Beferendum by cattle owners in Pennsylvania and the Nation indicates that Farmers Union policy reflects the thinking of real farmers and ranchers across America," said Pennsylvania Farmers Union Director Leonard Zemaitis.

In the wake of a 60 to 40 percent defeat nationally,

and a crushing 90 percent to 10 percent margin in Pennsylvania, Zemaitis said it is clear cattle producers reject beef promotion and favor keeping money in their pockets—not in the hands of an unelected beef board.

The Beef Referendum would have been a mandatory assessment scheme on the production of beef, paid by producers, to fund a \$150

million national program of advertisement, promotion, and research. As written, it violated at least five criteria for such plans spelled out in National Farmers Union policy. For this reason, the Farmers Union stood alone among national farm organizations in opposition.

Among those in favor were the National Cattlemen's Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association. The Pennsylvania Grange remained neutral.

The Pennsylvania Farmers Union was the only organization in the Commonwealth providing information and urging a "No" vote. It now is clear that 90 percent of the cattle owners voting agreed with that position.

Results of the vote in Pennsylvania were 6855 against, to 789 for. Every county in the Commonwealth soundly voted to defeat the measure.

Zemaitis said, "National Cattlemen's groups, and other pushing the referendum simply missed the drift of our cattle producer sentiment. A similar program was defeated in 1977, when it required a two-thirds vote for passage; the 1980 proposal required only

50 percent, and even that could not be accomplished."

Pennsylvania Farmers Union effort to inform producers was a real "grassroots" effort, with members in most counties distributing flyers and talking to their fellow farmers. Both the policy position and the effort to defeat the order illustrate that with the information at hand, cattle producers will make correct decisions for themselves.

PENNSYLVANIA AGRICULTURE



WE'RE GROWING BETTER

Straw poll

(Continued from Page B2)

farmer and the small businessman.

Haabstad, who has had experience in the small business world with his chemical and paper products companies, said he felt that farmers and small businessmen were over-regulated, with too many decisions being made for them rather than by them.

Concerning the recent grain embargoes, Haabstad said if farm products are used as political tools he feels it will be necessary to spread the cost across to all citizens. He said he felt it was unfair to have farmers assume all of the responsibility and cost for the use of food as a political weapon to influence world decisions. This equal-

ing out of responsibility and cost he said could be done through increased financial support for farmers through government programs.

Haabstad said he was aware of the problem of handling farm and small business estates through personal experiences, and he said that in Delaware County they have a lower taxing plan if the farmland remains in agriculture for a minimum ten-year period. He said he realizes there are a number of proposed programs for dealing with the inheritance problem and preserving farmland and he recognizes the need to support them in order to "save an important aspect of our American heritage".

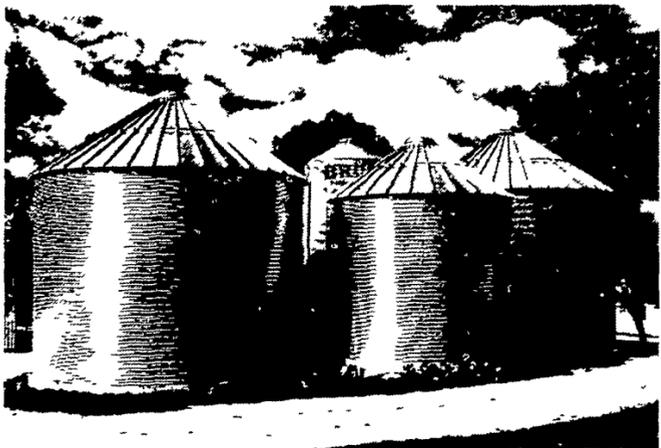
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