

Farm bill hearings open to overflow audience

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Senator Jesse Helms, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, opened hearings on the 1981 Farm Bill to an overflow audience Monday.

Helms said, "American agriculture and all who depend upon it will focus on this legislative package and our actions involving it. For this Committee, there is no greater task in 1981 than our work on this complex and delicate mix that has become known through the years as the Farm Bill."

The hearings are scheduled to continue through March 26, with

different topics of concern to agriculture taken up virtually each day.

The hearings will serve as the basis for legislation on basic food and agriculture statutes which expire this year.

Helms noted a few changes in the hearings' schedule, which has been announced earlier.

Agriculture Secretary John Block will appear before the Committee at 9 a.m., Wednesday, March 25, at which time he will give a detailed statement on the Administration's farm policy. That hearing will be held in the larger

Foreign Relations Committee room, 4221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, instead of 324 Russell Senate Office Building, the Committee hearing room, where all sessions are being held unless otherwise noted.

Also, because of complications results from the absence of accurate budget data for fiscal 1982, the Committee will put off consideration of the budget until Wednesday, March 18, Helms said.

David Stockman, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, is expected to appear before the Committee at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17, Helms said. This has

made it necessary to cancel one day of food stamp hearings, Helms said. He said a larger hearing room will be sought for that day, also.

Forestry testimony has been rescheduled to March 19, beginning at 2 p.m., from the earlier date of March 26. Further, the March 12 hearing on general issues has been moved up to 1 p.m. from its original 2 p.m. time, Helms said.

Senator Edward Zorinsky of Nebraska said, "I hope we can look back and say we have written a better farm bill than has ever been

written before." He said, "We must preserve and strengthen agriculture, our most vital industry."

Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi noted that farmers' real income is down 25 percent and said Congress must "create an environment for profit for farmers." Cochran said he felt hearings on the legislation should also be held outside of Washington.

Senator John Melcher of Montana said a separate comprehensive farm bill he has introduced, S. 480 has as one of its main provisions and mechanism for giving "needed assurance there will be some stability in the marketplace" for farm products.

Also appearing at the opening session was Senator Charles E. Grassley of Iowa, not a member of the Committee, who said he favors continuing the present mix of price and income support programs. At the same time, he said government must allow the marketplace to serve as the biggest influence over farm prices.

Witnesses heard the first day were:

DeVon R. Woodland, President, National Farmers Organization, accompanied by Charles Frazier, Director, Washington Office, National Farmers Organization;

Edward Andersen, Master, National Grange;

Marvin Meek, Chairman, American Agriculture Movement;

Ellen Haas, Director, Consumer Division, Community Nutrition Institute;

Hilton Bracey, Vice President, Government Affairs, Midcontinent Farmers Association, Columbia, Missouri; and

Edward Bowman, President, National Association of Farmer-Elected Committeemen, Oneida, Illinois.

NCA president-elect speaks to Pa. Cattlemen

STATE COLLEGE — Pennsylvania cattle producers attending the annual banquet of the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association heard first-hand news from the national organization's president-elect on Monday. Sam Washburn, who is known as the Eastern cattleman with the National Cattlemen's Association, spoke to the crowd on current trends in financing and marketing cattle.

"Marketing of cattle is going to change," said the third generation Charolais breeder. "With present fuel prices, it's too costly to move feeders all over the country."

Washburn projected in the next few years, cattle producers will see an increase in electronic stimulation of beef in the slaughter houses to improve meat tenderness, along with an increase in the adaptation of hot boning in meat processing. He also predicted a centralized marketing system

with electronic marketing methods allowing cattle to be sold without stress and disease exposure.

Washburn aroused surprised reactions from some cattle producers when he exclaimed "live-selling of cattle is archaic." It's the least competitive way of marketing the product, he said, with no chance for the buyer to accurately evaluate what's being purchased until after it's bought and hanging on the rail.

"Even now, there is a growing trend for sellers to hold title to their cattle longer. They're maintaining title of the cattle on the rail — and some are even holding title of the boxed beef," Washburn stated.

The 1973 Master Farmer and 1978 National Cattle Feeder of the Year told the Pennsylvania producers the National Association is in support of the federal meat grading proposed revisions.

"By modernizing the grading to

allow some of the good grades to fall into choice will provide the consumer with leaner beef that has as good of an eating quality as the old choice grade," he remarked.

Concerning beef promotion, Washburn said cattlemen need to encourage consumers to eat, not necessarily more beef, but the same amount at a higher price. This promotion, he said, needs to take place where the people are and not just where the cattle are raised to producers can see their check-off dollars at work.

Washburn noted NCA has been working on developing overseas markets, and has worked against beef imports which lower the price cattle producers receive for their products.

Two items cattle producers need to keep an eye on, said Washburn, are water supplies and capital.

"Interest costs and inflation are ravaging the American public," he warned. "Good management will be the key to survival. Cattle producers will need better records, accurate cash-flow plans, and computer record-keeping on the farm will become common-place as the need for instant financial information becomes essential."

Washburn closed by commenting, "Better government is less government. American cattle producers can do the job of producing more and better beef if they're given the chance to do what they know how to do best." —SM



DHIA adopts new logo

PENN STATE — The Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association adopted a new logo at their latest state board meeting in Penn State.

The new logo features the letters, "DHIA" and is presented against a black drawing the shape of the state.

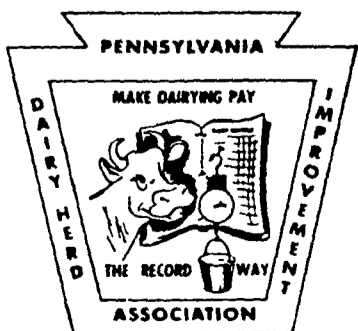
According to Ray Pruss, DHIA administrative assistant, the new logo is not a major change for DHIA. "We have updated our program in so many areas we felt that a new logo is just another area that needed updating."

"Pennsylvania DHIA's old logo, adopted in 1957, was a smiling cow with a bucket and scales. We feel DHIA has come a long way since that date in 1957 with most cows being tested by metering devices rather than buckets and scales," Pruss says. "Another development has been the institution of the computer processing of records and central testing of milk samples with electronic equipment rather

than the Babcock test."

Since its start in 1957, DHIA has become known as a record keeping system by which most management decisions on a dairy farm can be made and measured. DHIA testing can prove a feeding or health problem or even mastitis if a high somatic cell count is indicated.

But perhaps the greatest improvement since its beginning, is the increase of membership from 120,000 to 310,000.



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