

Legislative Roundup

Ag area bill back on House floor

HARRISBURG — A meeting of the House of Representative's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, chaired by Representative Joseph Grieco, was called on short notice Monday to consider further amendments to House Bill 143, the ag areas bill.

According to Lancaster's Representative Noah Wenger, the Committee incorporated seven amendments to HB 143. However, he noted, these amendments didn't change the bill's main thrust.

The Committee unanimously accepted the changes, said Wenger, and moved it out of committee. HB 143 is scheduled on the House Calendar for its third reading and should be voted on next week.

Wenger pointed out there were concerns involving the terminology that resulted in the bill being recalled to committee. He added the language was clarified so everyone was sure what was meant by the bill.

"I'm optimistic," said Wenger when asked what he thought the chances were for HB 143 to be passed. "We hope to get the bill moving, but you can never be sure

what will come up tomorrow."

Wenger also mentioned legislators were working on an update of the Pennsylvania Food Laws.

"The present laws go back to 1909 — and there have been many amendments," he explained. "The new legislation would replace those fourteen amendments with one law that would be more in compliance with the federal regulations."

Wenger noted legislators are working with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in preparing the draft which is about ready. When it is finished, the bill concerning warehouse storage and distribution of food through commercial channels will be introduced in the House.

The Ag Committee will be meeting again on Monday to consider Senate Bill 512 which amends the Pennsylvania Harness Racing Law. They also will be acting on a bill that's sure to make dairy producers bubble with pride.

House Bill 1351 is probably one of the shortest pieces of legislation to cross a politician's desk. In seven typed lines it calls for milk to be

"selected, designated, and adopted, the official drink of Pennsylvania."

House Bill 767, which calls for the elimination of cooperative block voting on ag commodity referendums, is still biding time in the Ag Committee, waiting for a public hearing date to be set. The Committee voted unanimously on April 14 to hold the public hearing.

HB 767 was introduced by Clarion County Representative David Wright. If it becomes law, HB 767 will take away

block vote for their membership.

Under present law, if a co-op member fails to vote in a generic advertising program, the co-op board may do the voting. A farmer can vote against the co-op by submitting a separate ballot.

In addition to changing block voting, the measure also would change Section 6 to increase the majority needed for passage of a referendum from the current simple majority to a two-thirds majority.

Former House Ag Chairman Roy, W Wilt requested the public

hearing to give farmers a chance to speak out on the issue.

And in Washington, the 1981 Farm Bill has taken a temporary back seat to the budget. The four-year Farm Bill should be out of the House and Senate Ag Committees by next Friday.

A Pennsylvania Farmer's Union spokesman said, "Unless the Farm Bill is toned down some, Reagan might have to veto. If his economic program goes through, he'll be forced to cut back on target prices and deficiency payments."

Milk Board plans hearing

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board will hold a hearing on Wednesday, June 17, to determine if any changes should be made in the state's system of milk marketing areas.

The hearing will be held in Room 309 of the Agriculture Building, 2301 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg, at 10:30 a.m. on June 17.

Purpose of the hearing is to review the current number of milk marketing areas in the state, along with their geographical boundaries, to determine if any changes, such as consolidation, replacement, revision or reduction, should be made.

Persons wanting to receive copies of pre-submitted evidence must notify the Board before May 15.

Written evidence to be presented to the Board must be received before June 3 and rebuttal evidence must be submitted before June 10.



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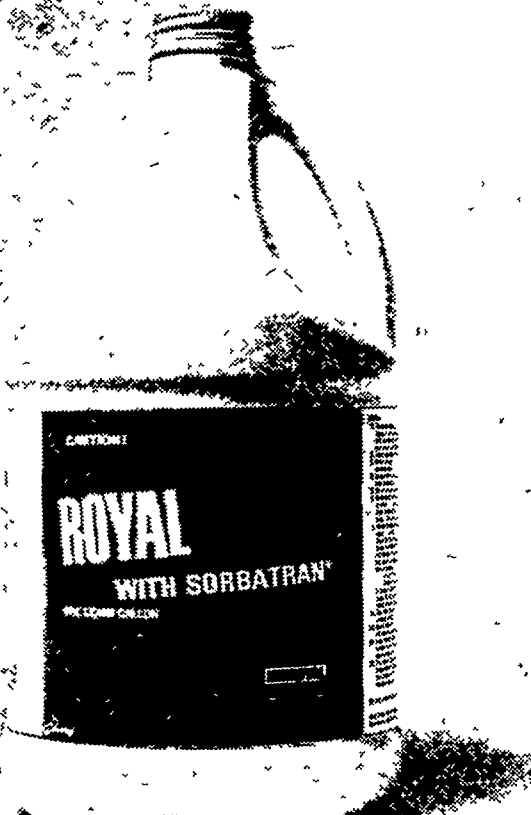
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