

## Berks dairy producers hold annual meeting

LEESPORT — A crowd of about 90 dairy producers gathered at the Ontelaunee Grange Hall for the annual Berks County Dairy Farmers' Association banquet.

After a hearty, family-style meal, the producers settled down to the business at hand.

Berks County's state legislator, Rep. John Davies, reviewed some of the current bills and proposals circulating through the House and Senate on Capital Hill in Harrisburg.

Berks County's Dairy Princess Betty Jean Hoke brought the farmers up-to-date on her promotion efforts for the dairy industry. She announced she had taken part in several parades, fairs, the state's Food Expo, Ag Progress Days, and dairy princess workshops.

County President Donald Duncan informed the producers that they had scored a major victory with the defeat in committee of House Bill 767. "The farming associations worked together to stop that legislation. If the block voting bill had passed, it could have killed the future of any dairy referendum."

Duncan pointed out dairy producers need a milk referendum. "In order to get a higher milk check, farmers have two choices — either produce more milk or promote and sell more Class I milk," he said.

In their own efforts to promote their product, the Berks dairy producers have ventured into the milk shake and ice cream vending business. With the help of Association members and local 4-H'ers, the farmers have found that folks love ice cream and milk shakes just as much as they used to, even if they cost a little more

these days.

The milk shake trailer earned a total of \$2,817.89 during the past year, even though it was only brought into service for the mid-summer fair circuit. This income will help to offset the first year's expenses which included the purchase of the trailer, licensing fees and other related costs which amounted to slightly more than \$5,000.

One of the Berks Dairy Farmers' Association's claim to fame is their salaried promotion coordinator, the only one in the state. This position was held by Phoebe Bitler, who left to assume a position with the Berks Extension Service this year. Replacing Phoebe and tackling the responsibilities with the assurance of a veteran dairy promoter is Karen Sattazahn, a former Berks Dairy Princess.

"I wish more counties had a program like the one Berks has," exclaimed Duncan, referring to their promotion and successful coordinator program.

The Association members elected four directors to serve three-year terms. Newly elected director is Harvey Krill, with Wilson Balthaser, John Stump, and Alton Rohrbach being reelected.

Entertainment for the evening was provided by Herman Hunsinger of Frystown who shared his experiences through slides of his trip to China with the People to People tour last summer. He explained the tour participants are "ambassadors of good will who pay their own way."

"The philosophy behind People to People is that if people of the world can get along, then governments will have to," Hunsinger concluded.

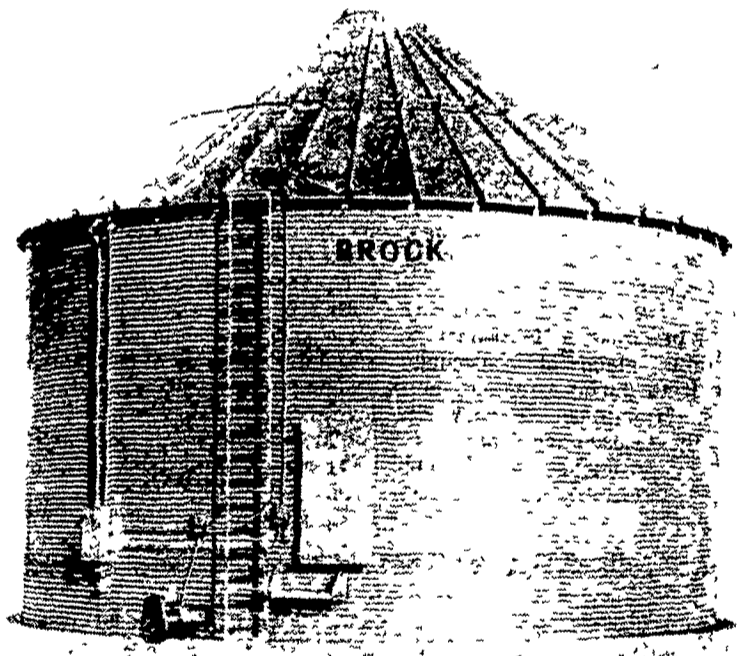


Berks Dairy Association President Donald Howard after the annual meeting held last evening. Duncan discusses business with directors Friday evening. Alton Rohrbach, John Stump, and Leroy



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