

# Lancaster Farming

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## PFU earns charter; opposes milkerendum

**HERSHEY** — The Pennsylvania Farmers' Union officially emerged from under the wing of the national organization on Thursday as National President George Stone presented newly-elected president Jim Brown with the state's official charter.

"Now they're going to farm on their own," said Stone.

Although the National Farmers Union has been around since 1902, it only has been a statewide organization since the early 1970s. But, there have been individual county Farmers' Union groups meeting throughout the Keystone state since the early 1900s.

The Pennsylvania Farmers' Union held their 10th Annual Convention here at the Hershey Hotel from Tuesday to Thursday.

As the first president in the state organization, Brown comes to the post with more than 30 years experience with Farmers' Union. The Mercer County farmer has served as county president for the

Since his exit from the dairy business six years ago, Brown has switched over to raising beef cattle. "I thought it would be an easier way to make a living," he explained. "But I can't seem to make any money at it." He has a cow/calf herd of about 40 head of Simmental x Hereford crossbreeds and fattens about 60 steers each year. Brown farms 400 acres of grain, owning 152 acres of land and leasing all the rest.

Helping Brown with the administration of the now-official Pennsylvania Farmers Union will be vice president Barbara Woods, a Franklin County farmer. Married to Robert A. Woods, Barbara has been an active member of the Farmers' Union for the past six years, serving on the state legislative committee as chairman and as county president for the past three years. On their farm in Franklin County, Barbara and Robert milk about 60 head of

decent living. That's our only hope for salvation. The family unit is the only chance for farming's survival. Things have to be changed — consumers need to realize the worth of the family farm. And PFU is finally getting large enough to be heard."

The membership of PFU has grown steadily during the past 10 years and now numbers 5,600 family units. The magic number of 5,000 was reached last year — the number needed for chartering — however the organization said it felt it wasn't quite ready to leave the National's nest just then.

This year they're ready, with plans on how to continue to increase membership and build their organization through membership drives, providing full-line insurance programs, offering accounting services and possibly legal services, too. At the present time, there are 30 county organizations that have received their state charters.

During the convention, voting delegates from these counties gave their blessings and non-blessings



National Farmers' Union President George Stone, left, presents PFU President Jim Brown, Mercer County, right, and Vice President Barbara Woods, Franklin County with the state farm organization's official charter. Brown and Woods are the first officers in the history of PFU.

ice president, Wood is instrumental in organizing the milk-marketing cooperative during the late 1950s.

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## Harkin terms '81 Farm Bill as "Family Farm Liquidation Act"

BY SHEILA MILLER

**HERSHEY** — In his speech to close to 300 of Pennsylvania's top agricultural leaders, legislators, and Farmers' Union members, Iowa Congressman Tom Harkin surprised and startled those assembled for the Tuesday evening banquet of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Union's 10th Annual Convention by his criticism of the 1981 Farm Bill — calling it the "Family Farm Liquidation Act."

"It amounts to little more than a raid on farmers to pay for billions of dollars in tax breaks for the rich and giant corporations, a grossly

unfair budget, and a staggering increase in the military's big spending," he exclaimed.

Harkin labelled the Farm Bill as a "blatant political payoff to the 'boll weevil' southern democrats who rescued the President's tax and budget plans" earlier last year.

"It is interesting to note that while northern crops such as wheat, corn, and other feed grains, and dairy were feeling the full force of the axe, southern crops fared especially well," Harkin continued. He cited the increased loan rate for peanuts and a new sugar program as evidence of the Administration's program payoff, while dairy producers were ignored and the 75 percent parity floor of the price support program abandoned.

"Next year, under the new Farm Bill, the support price will be set at \$13.25 per hundredweight — a mere 15 cents increase from the current support price," Harkin remarked. Since dairy farmers didn't receive an increase in support price at the beginning of the marketing year, Harkin pointed out that, in reality, they will be going at least three full years with a flat price.

"By the end of next year, the \$13.25 support price for milk could be equivalent to about 65 percent of parity, and by the end of our new four-year Farm Bill, the support price could be in the neighborhood of 58 percent parity," he admonished. "Contrast this to the dairy program which the House of Representatives passed which would have set a firm floor of 70 percent of parity. Still lower than

the traditional 75 percent level, but necessary to gradually bring supply in line with demand."

Harkin, chairman of the House Dairy Subcommittee, pointed out that he did not vote for the Farm Bill.

In addressing the leaders of Pennsylvania's agriculture, Harkin emphasized that the "key determinant to reviving agriculture" in the U.S. is linked very closely to the economy. However, his outlook was not optimistic.

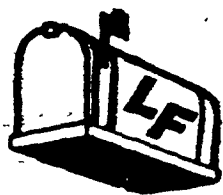
Harkin noted that January farm prices were 9.7 percent below a year earlier while the index of prices paid by farmers was up 4.1 percent. He stated that in terms of parity ration, farm prices are hovering around 57 percent — the same level as during the Depression — compared with the average parity ratio of 64 percent in 1980, 71 percent in 1979, and 70 percent in 1978.

"Net farm income which was almost \$33 billion in 1979 plummeted to \$19.9 billion in 1980," Harkin stressed. This farm income stayed about the same in 1981, he added, pointing out that when adjusted for inflation, these income figures during the past two years are the lowest they've been since 1934.

Much of the farm community's dilemma can be blamed on high unemployment — currently 8.9 percent. When people are out of work, Harkin said, they don't have the dollars to spend on food and as a result meat and dairy product consumption falls off dramatically.

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Ken Reid is a circuit riding preacher — of sorts. He rides and he preaches and he finds rewards in both... B30.

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## Protest to Act 319 spurs PDA to action

**HARRISBURG** — In a concerted effort to patch the few loopholes that exist in the Clean and Green Law (Act 319) that surfaced as a result of application in Bradford/Sullivan counties recently, Fred Wertz, research analyst with PDA and several directors of rural affairs and the agriculture department met Thursday to brief several legislators on the problem.

Wertz announced that a meeting between assessors, farmers and representatives from Bradford County will meet with him and other ag directors to discuss the act, Tuesday at 10 a.m. in the Capitol Annex.

The controversy stems from a protest recently issued by the Bradford/Sullivan County Far-

mers' Association to the Bradford County Board of Assessment for raising land use values on property enrolled under the Clean and Green Act.

The protest committee objects to the increase in assessment because it may be discriminatory in that only landowners under the Act are being singled out, and that procedure specified under the Act to notify the landowners of their new assessment has not been followed.

One director at the meeting commented that the resolution of this Bradford/Sullivan problem will indeed set a precedent for the state's farmland assessment under the Act.

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