

## PDA slates milkerendum voting dates

HARRISBURG - Pennsylvania's dairy farmers will vote on a proposed milk marketing program May 8-22, according to State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell. A two-week period was set to give milk producers ample opportunity to cast ballots, which will be mailed to producers several days prior to the referendum.

The referendum is the final step in two years of deliberations among the state's 16,000 dairy

farmers to create a self-help program to boost consumption and sales of milk and dairy products.

A sixth and final public hearing on the proposed program is scheduled for Friday, March 12 at 1 p.m. in Room 309 of the Agriculture Building in Harrisburg. Previous hearings were held in Hazleton, Lancaster, State College, Clarion and Donegal. More than 130 dairy farmers testified at these hearings

and nearly 600 attended. According to state officials, testimony from dairy cooperatives, which represent about two-thirds of the dairy farmers in Pennsylvania, was very favorable to the program.

On Tuesday, Hallowell sent notice to the general managers of the state's 42 dairy cooperatives of provisions for their voting in the referendum. By law, a dairy cooperative may bloc vote its

membership if a bloc vote is approved by the co-op's board of directors and members are notified of the intent to vote this way 30 days before the ballot is cast.

Hallowell told the general managers that the referendum period begins May 8 with a May 22 deadline for ballots to be post-marked. In order for a dairy cooperative to bloc vote its membership, a board meeting for

bloc vote approval membership notification must be completed before April 20.

The notification provision is set to allow dairy farmers notice of their cooperative's intent. Individual dairy cooperative members may cast a ballot even if their cooperative does bloc vote.

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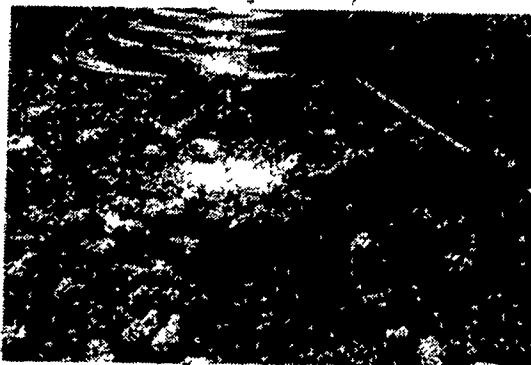
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