

Harrisburg legislators hear from farmers

BY SHEILA MILLER

HARRISBURG — More than 500 Pennsylvania Farmers' Association members converged on the state capital this Monday, wearing lobbyists' hats for the day.

After an impromptu singing of "America", the farmers settled down to an afternoon of preparation at the Penn Harris Motor Inn before boarding buses carrying them to the Capitol's steps.

PFA's Al Myers briefed the group on significant legislation moving through the Capitol chambers.

On the Senate side, bills that are of importance to the agricultural community include: the Noxious Weed Bill, H.B. 1429; the Right to Farm Bill, H.B. 1823; Farmland Preservation Bill, S.B. 1283; Milk Sanitation Bill, S.B. 1350; and the Milk Identification Bill, S.B. 1349.

The Noxious Weed Bill, introduced May 12, 1981 by Rep. Samuel Hayes (R-81st) is currently on its third reading in the Senate. The bill, which had been passed earlier by the House, was tied up in a Senate committee since December. According to Sen. Edward Helfrick, chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee (R-27th), the bill "will be voted on soon."

PFA, along with the other major farm organizations, has been working on moving this bill (a follow up to a similar bill H.B. 2360 proposed in the 1978-80 legislative session) through to the Governor for signing so that multiflora rose, marijuana, chicory, Canadian thistle, and Johnsongrass would be considered noxious weeds.

The bill provides for the Secretary of Agriculture to designate weed control areas and require land owners to control or destroy the noxious weeds. It also allows for penalties to be dealt out to persons who fail to comply with the provisions of the bill.

The Right to Farm Bill, in-

troduced by Lancaster's Rep. Noah Wenger on Sept. 22, 1981, also has met with some opposition — this time from the Association of Township Supervisors. As a result, it has been held in the Senate Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee since its House passage.

When approached by PFA members about the status of H.B. 1283, Sen. Helfrick assured the assembled farmers that the bill was expected to pass out of committee with some amendments during the next meeting of the Senate Ag Committee.

This bill protects farmers who are carrying out normal operations against nuisance suits and ordinances under certain circumstances. It also protects expanded farming operations from similar suits after one year's existence.

Predicting the future of his own bill, S.B. 1283 introduced in January, Helfrick optimistically reported "We'll get that one through."

The bill which provides for a Lands Management Advisory Committee within the Department of Agriculture relating to state-owned farmland, is on its second reading on the Senate floor. This legislation, dubbed the Farmland Preservation bill, provides that young farm families are given preference in obtaining leases for state farmland and facilities.

Currently PDA is responsible for leasing seven farms and operates three farms. S.B. 1283 would authorize the Commission to receive the lease proceeds from the farms, select farmers who would receive the leases, and make necessary repairs to the farms. The Commission would be responsible for upgrading the properties or recommending sale with deed restrictions limiting their use to agriculture.

"It is expected that management by the Commission will insure that



Pennsylvania Farmers' Association President Keith Eckel, right, poses with some of the Harrisburg leaders during the PFA legislative banquet held Monday evening at the Penn Harris. Pictured with Eckel are: from left, Penrose Hallowell, Pa. Secretary of Agriculture; Sen. Patrick Stapleton; Sen. Edward Helfrick; Rep. Ken Cole; and Rep. Joseph Grieco.

the properties become and remain viable agricultural assets," Helfrick said.

The PFA delegates confronted their legislators on two new bills they support, introduced last Wednesday by Sen. Frank O'Connell (R-20th), Helfrick, and Sen. Patrick Stapleton (D-41st) — S.B. 1350 and 1349. Both bills have been referred to the Senate Ag Committee.

S.B. 1350 would amend the Milk Sanitation Act of 1935 to add a definition for manufactured dairy products: "Milk for manufacturing purposes means milk produced for processing and manufacturing into products for human consumption but not subject to requirements of milk for pasteurization."

"Manufactured dairy products means butter, cheese (natural or processed), dry whole milk, nonfat dry milk, dry buttermilk, dry whey, evaporated milk (whole or

skim), condensed whole and condensed skim milk (plain or sweetened), and such other products for human consumption as may be designated by the secretary."

The bill goes on to detail standards for the production of manufactured milk — from the cow to the container.

The PFA members shared their concerns regarding the possible loss of current interstate markets if Pennsylvania milk cannot be certified as meeting USDA's minimum standards. They urged their legislators to support the bill since it also establishes minimum sanitation standards for handling and processing manufactured dairy products as a means of discouraging the manufacture and sale of poor quality cheese in Pennsylvania.

The definition of manufactured dairy products spilled over into S.B. 1349 which calls for the Milk

Identification Act of 1961 to be amended. This bill would give the REAL seal campaign a shot in the arm since it authorizes the development of specific standards of identity for dairy products so that those products that did not measure up could not call themselves dairy products. The bill also establishes penalties for those violating the act — upon conviction, they would be guilty of a summary offense.

The farmer lobbyists were happy to hear Sen. Helfrick announce the Cruelty to Animals Bill, S.B. 1208 is "dead". He told the group he almost got into a "fist fight" over the controversial legislation introduced by Sen. George Gekas (R-15th). Helfrick said he tried to get the bill into the Ag Committee, but it has remained in the Judiciary Committee which is chaired by Gekas. According to Helfrick, Gekas has "seen the

(Turn to Page A23)

SAVE: **ENERGY! TIME! MONEY!**



Here's Something That Should Be Part Of **YOUR** Program: **TWO** Jobs In **ONE** Operation

- ★ Efficient Glenco Chisel Plowing
- ★ Nitrogen Application with Cold-flow Ammonia

Custom Applied By The **PROS**

TRY US - We Have The Product and The Knowledge



ORGANIC PLANT FOOD CO.

OPEN: 2313 Norman Rd., Lancaster, PA 17601
Mon.-Fri. 7 to 4 Phone: 717-397-5152
Sat. 7 to 12

INSULATION

Distributor For

R. MAX URETHANE
(4x8 or to your spec)

- ★ FIBERGLASS ROLLS
- ★ BLOWN IN



WHEELING CHANELDRAIN ROOFING & SIDING

Colors In Stock:

- White
- Gold
- Brown
- Red
- Avocado Green
- Plain Galvanized

Note: There will be a light green in stock after April

Distributor For **ALUMAX ALUMINUM ROOFING & SIDING**

COMPLETE BUILDINGS POLE AND TRUSSES



FETTERVILLE SALES

John M. Esh
RD2, Box 267, East Earl, PA 17519

Call us for low prices -
(717) 354-7561