## Jepsen calls for Senate approval of SCS chief

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Citing concerns in recent weeks that have appeared to have shaken the faith in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's conservation policy, U.S. Senator Roger Jepsen (R-Iowa) last Wednesday called on Secretary John Block to "clear up the confusion" on the direction of the nation's conservation policy

and programs.

In opening a hearing on the Administration's proposed soil and water conservation programs, Jepsen said he wondered whether the direction now is toward a stronger conservation policy or a replacement of "Conservation realities with political sen-sitivities."

listed soil conservation as a top priority, the "federal budget priorities would suggest otherwise," the Iowa Republican said.

below the current levels - one that action last year giving it pershows decreases in several major manent status," Jepsen said.

While Block has repeatedly soil conservation service programs," Jepsen, who is chairman of the Senate Soil Conservation Subcommittee, said.

"I am concerned over a budget "I hope the secretary will be able that terminates the Resources to clear up ... the justification for a Conservation and Development budget request that is 10 percent program despite congressional

## **Pennsylvanians oppose Block's preferred** conservation program, survey reveals

HARRISBURG - Pennsylvanians supported one of three alternative soil and water conservation programs proposed for the U.S. Department of Agriculture by Secretary of Agriculture John Block. They also backed 14 of 20 features in the Secretary's preferred program, according to a report released by USDA officials.

Graham T. Munkittrick state conservationist, USDA Soil Conservation Service, said that 2,291 individuals and 71 groups submitted comments on the proposed programs.

Of the three alternative programs, continuing present programs was supported by 60.3 percent. The proposal to redirect Federal conservation programs was opposed by 52.7 percent. Overall, the Secretary's preferred program had the greatest op-position with 56.3 percent voicing their disagreement.

Several key features were supported. The idea of targeting more of the funds to the areas with the greatest soil and water problems received 61.5 percent backing; however, many

respondents questioned whether the Northeast would receive a smaller share of the conservation dollars.

Requiring Farmers Home Administration borrowers to have a conservation plan to be eligible for loans—a form of cross-compliance—had 59.3 percent support. Greatest support was given to the increased use of costeffective practices such as conservation tillage and no-till, and to minimizing conflicts between USDA conservation programs.

Other features that were supported included establishing clear national conservation policies, strengthening the partnership between land users and the Federal government, closer coordination between USDA agencies, use of tax incentives to encourage application of soil conservation measures, increasing USDA research on soil and water, setting up pilot programs to test new methods, strengthening and increasing data collection and evaluation, expanding the use of long-term agreements between USDA and farmers to conserve natural resources.

Among the features of the preferred program that drew opposition were several key items, Providing block grants from existing soil conservation program funds drew the greatest opposition with 78.7 percent against. Another series of features that lacked support was local, state and federal boards to carry out the new programs. Oppositing varied at each level but averaged around 60 percent.

Munkittrick reported these responses have been forwarded to Washington, D.C., offices of USDA mid-June, added Munkittrick.

where the reports from 50 states and Puerto Rico will be sur marized a national report mitted to Secretary Block.

Seventy-one groups and units of government responded. These inicuded 40 conservation districts, one federal agency, 8 units of state government, 13 local governments, 6 farm organizations, 2 environmental groups, and 1 academic institution.

The public responses will also be summarized by counties. This information will be available about

## N.J. dairy team places first

FLEMINGTON, N.J. - Hunterdon County's 4-H program has more than one bowl team which has made a name for itself in the past few months. The 4-H Horse Bowl Team captured first place honors in February's state competition. Now the 4-H Dairy Bowl Team has clinched a state title.

The team of Tom Hoffman of Califon, Tom González, team captain, and Jeff Nelson of Pittstown and Janet Rogers of Ringoes

placed first in the 1982 State 4-H Dairy Bowl Competition. Alternate was Ted Hildebrandt of Oldwick.

This annual contest was held at Cook College in late March. A total. of four teams competed: Hunterdon, Sussex, Somerset and Salem-Cumerland counties.

Questions through all three phases of the contest dealt with facts about the dairy industry.

Coaches for Hunterdon's team included Mark Douglass of Pittstown and Sandy Rogers of Ringoes. The team is now eligible to compete at the national competition to be held in Louisville, Kentucky sometime this fall. The team will work on raising funds for this trip in the near future.

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He also questioned the effect of drastic cuts in the Agricultural Conservation Program which . Jepsen said was "designed to encourage farmers to practice soil C conservation measures."

Referring to the recent appointment of Missouri farmer Peter C. Myers as chief of the Soil Conservation Service. Jepsen said, "I recognize the secretary has had the best of intentions, but whether he knows it or not, he has opened a pandora's box.

"It would seem that this is an inopportune time to go outside the professional ranks when we are in the first stages of redirecting this nation's entire conservation thrust," he said.

Jepsen expressed his concern over the prospect of an everyfour-year shuffle in that top position" and the resultant "loss of continuity" in conservation policies.

"I do not like that position being subject to prevailing political winds," he said. "I would not want the S.C.S.'s professional excellence and credibility to be undermined."

The senator said he feared this would be a step towards making the SCS's state and local structures "more political in nature" in the future. He asked the secretary for assurances "that this is not the way SCS is going.'

Jepsen announced his plans to introduce legislation to require individuals named to head the SCS and the Forest Service to be subject to Senate confirmation. The individual would have to be qualified on the basis of scientific education and professional background.

Referring to proposed federal budget cuts in conservation programs, Jepsen warned that 'soil erosion efforts are not an isolated issue to be handed over to the state and local governments i(i) with the admonition 'take care of it."'

He said "as long as soil erosion is an issue affecting everyone in the world who has to put food on the table, the federal government must be involved."

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