

State ag committee plans busy month

HARRISBURG — August has proven to be a busy month for the state House Agriculture Committee.

The panel has toured a number of Pennsylvania wineries and is scheduled to visit Ag Progress Days at Penn State University. There is also a hearing slated on the controversial "puppy mill" legislation.

"We have taken advantage of the current break in floor sessions to learn more about the problems and concerns of Pennsylvania's agriculture industry," said committee Chairman Joseph V. Grieco.

Earlier this month the committee toured the grape-growing area of northwestern Penn-

sylvania. The commonwealth ranks fourth in the nation in the production of grapes. The panel toured four wineries and the Welch's grape processing plant in the Erie County borough of Northeast.

"Much of the state's crop is sold to Welch's," Grieco said. "So, while Pennsylvania ranks fourth in grape growing, it's 15th in the production of wine."

"The committee members who made the trip were quite appreciative of the opportunity to hear the concerns of the grape growers and vintners," he said. Grieco noted that the trip was arranged by Rep. Harry Bowser, R-Erie and Warren.

"Rep. Bowser is well-aware of

the tremendous growth potential of the grape industry in the commonwealth," Grieco said. "It could be a valuable source of jobs in the next few years."

An Agriculture Committee hearing on a proposal to change the state dog law and to end inhumane puppy mills will be held in the Capitol on Tuesday, Aug. 17 at 10 a.m.

Grieco said he is conducting the hearing at the request of Bucks County Rep. James C. Greenwood, the prime sponsor of the legislation. The major section of Greenwood's bill would require anyone who boards more than 25 dogs to obtain a license for a kennel.

"Of course, not all dog breeders

are out only to make a fast buck and subject animals to cruel and unhealthy conditions," Grieco said. "However, since kennels are not licensed in Pennsylvania it's difficult to monitor conditions at breeding operations."

"The kennels would be licensed under Rep. Greenwood's bill and dog enforcement officers would be able to inspect facilities to insure that the dogs being raised have adequate food, water, shelter and veterinary care." The legislation would also regulate dog detention facilities.

Those scheduled to testify include Secretary of Agriculture Penrose Hallowell and Donald Moul, director of the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement.

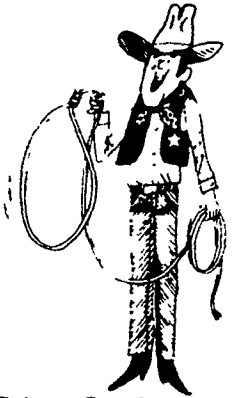
A visit to the Ag Progress Days at Penn State University will cap the summer activity for the committee.

"Along with the State Farm Show in January, this event ranks as one of the most important dates on each year's agriculture calendar," Grieco said. The panel will hear from Dr. John Oswald, the president of the university.

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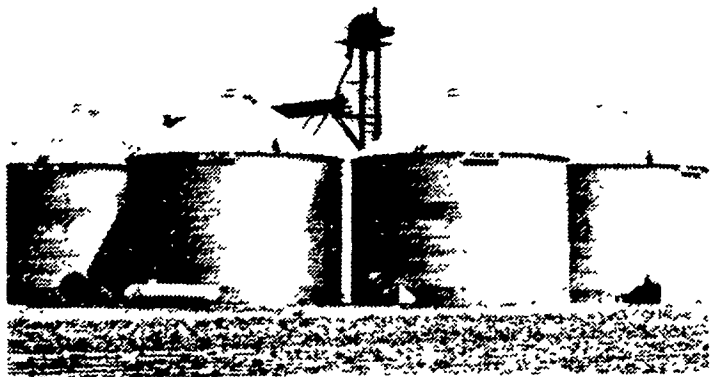
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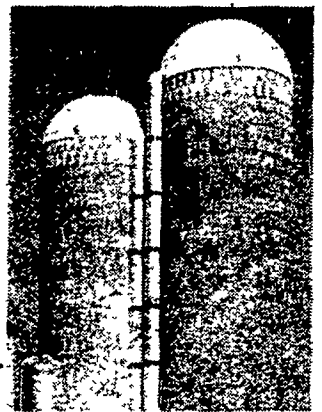
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DAIRY I.Q. ANSWER: FALSE. Half-and-half contains only 7 calories per teaspoon, while the non-dairy substitute has about 11½ calories. Question on Pg. C34.