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Will threatened truckers' strike hit ag?

BY SHEILA MILLER

LANCASTER — What are the possibilities that agriculture's independent truckers will join the ranks of their eighteen-wheeling counterparts and strike? The fact that the Independent Truckers Association has called for a strike on Jan. 31 to protest the taxes packaged within the recently passed Federal Tax Act has not rallied the ag independent truckers to the picket line — at least not yet.

According to PennAg Industries Association's David R. Brubaker, the independent truckers are not "protesting the 'nickel a gallon' aspects of the tax package" but are "protesting what they consider to be 'outlandish' taxes of many varieties included in the Act.

"They also are using the opportunity to once again raise tangential issues, such as the 55 miles per hour speed limit, pay for waiting time, etc.," Brubaker said.

But it looks like the independent truckers will be carrying their picket signs without the assistance of their American Trucking Association "good buddies."

"While voicing sympathy for many of the goals of the independents, (the American Truckers Association) has vowed to not participate in the strike and to 'continue service as required by law,'" noted Brubaker.

"Our members are sympathetic to the independent truckers' needs," said Brubaker, referring to PennAg Industries. "That act was sold to the public as simply tacking on a nickel gas tax, but the actual bill is several hundred pages long."

Presently, Brubaker said PennAg is maintaining a neutral position on the issues being raised by the independent truckers. But, he said, the Association (which represents agriculture and its

allied industries) is "concerned."

"Some of our fertilizer company members have been building their inventories early in the event of a truckers' strike," observed Brubaker. "But if the strike should last too long, and use up a short term reserve, there would definitely be a negative impact on the ag industries — feed, seed and fertilizer."

What concerns PennAg the most, said Brubaker, is the threat of violence or intimidation which

could be experienced by agriculture's independent and union truck drivers.

"It's hard to control a strike by independents," added Brubaker. "It seems that whether the strike begins or ends is up to the discretion of a handful of individuals."

PennAg's spokesman's concerns are echoed by Donald Duncan, president of the Keystone Milk Marketing Council. He said that although he's confident the in-

dependent milk haulers will continue to pick up and deliver their perishable commodity since "they know the milk must go through, he is worried about the drivers' safety.

Duncan added some reassurance, however. He said that he has received a commitment from Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hollowell that state police protection will be available for

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Injunction halts milk tax

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO

LANCASTER — At the request of the state of South Carolina and others, a U.S. District Judge recently granted a preliminary injunction halting USDA's action to collect 50 cents per hun-

dredweight on all milk shipped in the country.

Judge Matthew Perry explained the injunction has no time limit, unlike the temporary restraining order he issued, last month.

"A temporary restraining order may last for ten days," said Perry. "A preliminary injunction has no time limit. Some last for many years."

The injunction ruling remains, said Perry, "until further order of the court."

Presently, there has been no trial date set for the law suit against USDA, U.S. Agriculture Secretary John Block and the Commodity Credit Corporation, which spawned Perry's decision.

Attorney for the state of South Carolina Clifford Koon said his client as well as the South Carolina Farm Bureau, the State Consumer Advocate and three dairy farmers are charging that Block, the USDA and the CCC failed to follow guidelines of the Administration Procedure Act.

Koon explained the Act calls for a public hearing and a public comment period on the effects as well as the regulations of the assessment.

Koon and others brought testimony before Judge Perry during a hearing on Jan. 3, after which Perry granted the injunction.

"I found the plaintiffs presented a show showing that the secretary

of agriculture failed to abide by the provisions in the Administration Procedure Act," Perry explained.

Meanwhile, the USDA has announced it has halted efforts to collect the Congressionally authorized 50-cent per hundredweight assessment.

In a letter, recently sent to milk handlers, the USDA said any assessments received while the order is in effect would be held in escrow, pending further developments in the litigation.

The letter urged those responsible for the collection to maintain accurate records of all marketing while the order is in effect. They also were asked to consider establishing voluntary escrow accounts in which funds could be held for later payments to the Commodity Credit Corporation, should those payments become necessary.

Presidents of eight northeastern milk co-ops, representing more than 12,000 producers, recently joined in the legal battle against the USDA.

According to Dairylea spokesman Bruce Snow, presidents from Dairylea, NEDCO, Eastern, Upstate, Niagra Co-op, Allied Federated Cooperatives, Lehigh Valley Farmers and Conesus Co-op, met earlier this month to unify a position regarding the half-dollar deduction.

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Geese gander across icy pond



Farm Show weather showed up a week late in Pennsylvania this year. As entries and exhibitors snuggled into familiar surroundings last Saturday after leaving Harrisburg and crowds behind just a day before, a blanket of snow ranging from scarcely a scuff to several inches deep gave Pennsylvania a more typical winter snowscape. Last week's cold froze over the old swimming hole, allowing these geese to walk on water.

Inter-State Districts begin

SOUTHAMPTON — It's that time of year again. Farm organizations across the state are gathering at annual meetings to take a look back at 1982 and a look ahead into what 1983 might hold in store for agriculture in Pennsylvania.

Joining the ranks of organizations meeting in crowded banquet halls this week were several Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative District locals. District 11 Cochranville and Oxford locals held their annual meeting on Thursday at the Cochranville Fire Hall, and District 12 met Friday in the Hoffman Building at the Quarryville Fairgrounds.

James Honan, secretary of Inter-State, was scheduled to be guest speaker at the District 11 and

District 12 dinner meetings, however he suffered a broken leg while trimming Christmas trees and was unable to attend. In his stead, Robert Dever, treasurer and assistant manager of Inter-State spoke to the dairy co-op members about the 50-cent assessment and the fact that Inter-State did not deduct the tax from producers' January milk checks. And Carol Zepp, assistant communications division manager, presented a slide show on the Cooperative's history since its inception in 1917.

District 11's Howard C. and Robert S. Mason, Oxford were presented with a five-year award for continuous participation in Inter-State's Cost of Production study. District 12's recipients of the five-year award were James W. Bowman of Ronks and

Lenewood Farm of Oxford.

Membership awards also were presented to District 11 and 12 members: Robert Mills, Cochranville, Dist. 11, received a 50-year membership award; Donald Shomaker, Cochranville, Dist. 11, received a 25-year award; James Bowman and Ivan Bowman, Jr., R2 Ronks, Dist. 12, received a 25-year membership award; and Robert H. and G. Ralph Kreider, R1 Quarryville, Dist. 12, received a 50-year membership award.

At press time, the election results for District 11 were posted: Cochranville Local - Duane Hershey, president; Richard L. Buckwalter, vice president; Harry L. Troop, secretary-treasurer; Elvin Rohrer, Jr., delegate; Harry

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HARRISBURG — As the final day of Pennsylvania's 67th Farm Show was bringing to a close another chapter in the history of Keystone State agriculture, another chapter was just turning its first page — the start of a sequel to the Thornburg-Hallowell "We're Growing Better" story.

Last Friday, Governor Dick Thornburgh announced to the public that he was reappointing his current cabinet member, Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hollowell, to another four-year term in office.

According to the Agriculture Press Office, Hollowell has accepted the reappointment.

He will assume office pending Senate confirmation. As we go to press, no date has been scheduled for the confirmation hearings.



Penrose Hollowell