

Rural development receives USDA policy priority

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The director of the federal Office of Rural Development Policy (ORDP) said recently that non-farm rural development has been assigned "unprecedented policy priority" by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Rural Development, ORDP director Willard "Bill" Phillips Jr., said the policy office has concentrated its work in five major areas:

— Preparing a strategy to encompass all Federal rural development efforts.

— Sponsoring leadership assistance projects for rural government leaders and private enterprises.

— Improving coordination of the federal response to State and local rural needs.

— Researching special rural issues.

— Increasing public awareness of rural America's problems and potential.

"The mission of ORDP is to serve as an advocate for rural America," Phillips said. "We intend to identify rural America's

most important needs, and suggest effective ways of meeting those needs."

He said this mission requires more than the work of ORDP, USDA, or even the federal government alone. "Successful rural development involves a partnership of these institutions with state and local governments and with private enterprise as well" Phillips said.

The rural development strategy process, he said, has raised non-farm rural issues to "a much higher level of visibility and importance within the USDA and it has revealed an extraordinary interdependence between the success of millions of American farms and the growth of the nonfarm rural economy."

Rural leadership assistance efforts, Phillips said, range from a meeting last year between Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block and leaders of 25 national rural development organizations to ORDP participation in the "Main Street" community development program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

These efforts also included

assistance to rural businesses seeking to enter the export market, encouragement of "homegrown" development of new products and technologies in rural America and improving minority participation in rural economic progress.

The meeting between Secretary Block and rural development leaders, following the Secretary's agriculture summit with farm organization leaders, illustrates dramatically the "unprecedented policy priority" that non-farm

rural development is receiving from USDA Phillips said.

Improvement in policy coordination also include creation of a special working group to respond to priority issues raised by a state-level "needs assessment" for rural America, increased rural participation in other Federal programs, and the rural application of a new "negotiated investment strategy" involving local, state and federal authorities in special community development

plans.

ORDP's joint work with USDA's Economic Research Service, the U.S. Census Bureau and other groups provides a clearer statistical view and better policy analysis of rural issues.

To increase public awareness of these issues, ORDP has organized an extensive schedule of rural development conferences, and is producing a Rural America Review newsletter and a Rural Resources Guide, Phillips said.

Md. Spring Holstein Show

set for April 13, 14

TIMONIUM, Md. — Approximately 645 cows will parade around the show ring during the Maryland Spring Holstein Show April 13 and 14, at the Timonium Fairgrounds in Timonium.

The heifer show at 11 a.m. on April 13 will begin the two-day event. This will be followed by a buffet supper at 6:30 p.m. Cost for

the buffet is \$6 per person.

Wrapping up Friday's events will be the first ever Maryland Futurity Show. Featuring 100 head of cattle, the show is set for 8 p.m. and will be highlighted by special effects such as colored sawdust, music and spotlights. Show personnel will be decked out in

tuxedos to add to the attractiveness of the show. A \$600 first prize and trophy will be awarded.

The cow show will be at 10 a.m. on April 14. Show judge is Lloyd Boyd of Bolivar, Mo.

All are invited to attend.

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