

# Pa. Grange backs proposed feed tax, milk promotion

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania State Grange has come out in support of a \$1.00 per ton feed tax proposal to support animal health and the State Milk Promotion and Marketing Program financed through the federal dairy promotion check-off.

The proposed \$1.00 per ton feed tax on all livestock feed and pet food manufactured in Pennsylvania would be collected at the manufacturing level. Users who grow and process their own feed would be exempt.

The proposal calls for the state to match each dollar with 50 cents from General Fund revenues. Funds would be used for animal disease research, diagnostic work and indemnity for mandatory depopulation.

The Grange also seeks additional state funding for creation of a "Commonwealth Diagnostic Services" network, a coordinated effort of the State Summerdale Laboratory, Penn State University's Department of Veterinary Science, and the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine. The Summerdale Laboratory would serve

as the core unit with primary responsibility for reportable diseases such as avian influenza and rabies, and exporting. The two universities would serve as satellite units, each providing different areas of expertise to prevent duplication of services. The universities also would provide field staff to assist producers and veterinarians in the field. The three laboratories would be updated and expanded, and a computer network linking them would allow data to be stored and shared.

The Grange seeks amendments to the State budget to provide money to renovate the three facilities, add additional personnel and to purchase laboratory equipment. The organization supports state budgets of \$6.8 million for Penn State's College of Agriculture, an increase of \$750,000 over the Governor's budget request; \$8.7 million for the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, an increase of \$1.3 million; and \$4.4 million for Summerdale, an increase of \$2.4 million.

Included in that request is

funding to build isolation containment facilities for research on highly pathogenic diseases such as avian flu. The State currently has no facility of this kind, and avian flu virus samples have been sent to Ames, Iowa all along for testing. Pennsylvania also has lost significant research funding due to the lack of isolation laboratories.

The federal program was authorized by legislation passed in late 1983 and is financed by a mandatory check-off of 15 cents per hundred pounds on all milk produced in the country. The program allows states with their

own programs to retain 10 cents per hundredweight for promotional efforts within the state. The remaining 5 cents will go to the national program.

The State Department of Agriculture recently announced that the Pennsylvania program was approved by U.S. Agriculture Secretary John Block, and that letters will go out to 2,700 dairymen who are not currently part of any federal order marketing program. In order to participate, dairymen must indicate in writing to the Department that they wish 10 cents

of their money to go to the state program. Participation is purely voluntary, and dairy farmers can opt out at any time.

The State Grange's policy supports "an aggressive advertising campaign by the dairy industry to promote the sale of fluid milk and all other dairy products in order to increase their per capita consumption." Wismer said the Grange is urging its members to contribute to the program, "and let the money go where it can be of the greatest benefit."

## Crops Day at Penn State on June 19

UNIVERSITY PARK — Small grains research and management will be among the topics featured at Penn State's annual Crops Day to be held June 19 at the Rock Springs Agronomy Research Farm, nine miles southwest of here on Route 45 west.

Several steps lead to successful small grain production and these will be discussed during Crops

Day, says Elwood Hatley of Penn State's Department of Agronomy, College of Agriculture.

Featured on the small grain portion of the program will be topics on variety performance, fertilization, seeding techniques, growth regulators for controlling stalk breakage, and the use of cultural practices and chemicals to control pests.

Crops Day will start at 9:30 a.m. on June 19 with a lunch break at noon. Lunch will be available at the farm. The day's program will stress forage management and research as well as small grains. Tours will end at 4 p.m.

"Variety selection is the first step to successful small grain production," Hatley commented. "Performance of small grain varieties — including spring oats, winter wheat, and winter barley — will be discussed," he added.

Proper nitrogen management is required for high yields and control of lodging (stalk breakage) in small grains, it was noted. Recent on-farm research shows that the rate of nitrogen applied to small grains depends on the frequency and rate of manure application as well as the rate of nitrogen application to previous crops. These factors will be discussed June 19, as well as time of nitrogen application and the use of growth regulators to control lodging.

Diseases continue to reduce small grain yields in Pennsylvania, Hatley observed. While disease losses vary from year to year, they can be reduced by using proper cultural techniques and by applying fungicides when needed. Plant pathologists will be on hand June 19, he said, to discuss yield losses. Comments will cover proper management practices and fungicide applications to reduce yield losses.

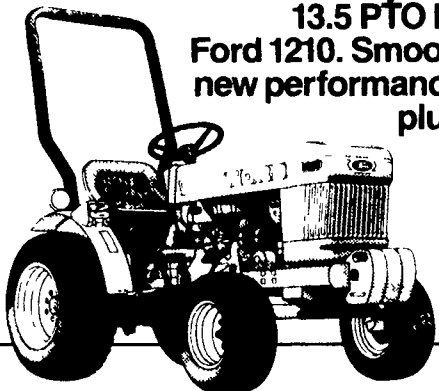
Small grains such as wheat, oats, and barley play an important role in Pennsylvania agriculture, Hatley said. They provide bedding and feed for livestock or straw and grain for the cash market.

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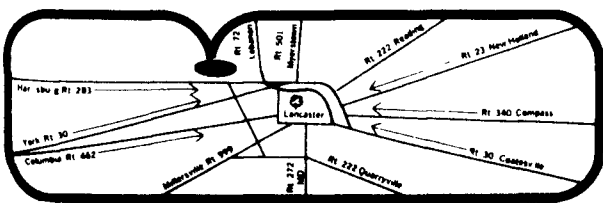


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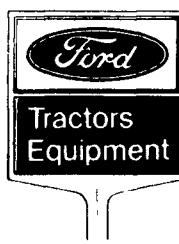
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## Crawford Ag Forum

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changed to a question and answer period.

Problems with the Milk diversion program now in effect were discussed, such as; "What happens after the 15-month period, who's to stop farmers from flooding the market then?" The pros and cons of a base quota system on milk production were considered although this would have to be mandatory and that is not necessarily desired.

The consensus of thinking was that in order to alleviate surpluses there is a need to advertise and research ag products. Also, educating the press, those in politics, as well as the public, about agriculture needs more emphasis. Farmers do not need adverse publicity about cholesterol in eggs, calories in milk, and so forth. The press and the public need to learn more about protein and calcium.