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Market, Not Politics, Must Set Prices, Delano Says

BY JAMES H. EVERHART
MECHANICSBURG — The nation needs a farm policy influenced by the market, not by political considerations, American Farm Bureau President Robert Delano told a Pennsylvania Farmers Association meeting here Wednesday.

"There are just two ways to make sure production matches market usage," Delano told the PFA Presidents Conference. "One is to allow supply-demand signals to get through to farmers and ranchers through the market. The other is to allow government to use mandatory production controls to do the same job."

The Government's intervention alternative, he added, is "the surest way to wreck commercial agriculture."

Delano specifically pointed out the federal farmer-held reserve, which, he said, raised grain prices a few cents a bushel, while causing price problems later.

His organization, he added, wants to eliminate or phase out the reserve, to "avoid the political temptation to enhance prices by building up the reserve," he said.

In followup questioning by Lancaster Farming, Delano said he supports a market-oriented price support program similar to the one used for soybeans. He said he expects Congress to enact a system in which price supports are tied to a percentage of the three- or five-year moving market.

And, in response to a question from one of the 31 county presidents attending the conference, Delano indicated that a similar market-oriented approach should be applied to milk pricing as well. He does not, he said, support extension of the dairy diversion program.

Much of the recently publicized crisis in American agriculture could be resolved, he added, if pricing was more realistic and market-oriented.

"If the support price is set at the proper level, you won't see defaults," he concluded.

The major threat facing

American agriculture — and the rest of the American economy — he told the group, is the federal budget deficit.

Currently, he said, the deficit is chewing up about 75 percent of net domestic savings, and driving up interest rates to levels which are "far above one of the usual monetary guideposts, the rate of inflation."

Many farm organizations have gone bankrupt as a result, he said.

To impress Congress with the Farm Bureau's stand on the issue, he said, the group has organized a "Balanced Budget Brigade" that is asking Congress to balance the federal budget by cutting federal spending and not by raising taxes.

"Our group makes it very plain that attempting to balance the budget by increasing taxes would

do just the opposite of what needs to be done. New taxes large enough to affect the deficit would increase interest rates, reduce disposable income and lower standards of living."

The group, he said, delivered two van loads of signed cards - from about one million individuals - calling on the President and Congress to balance the federal budget.

Agriculture, he said, must do its part, too.

"We are in trouble with the public because of the high costs of last year's farm program," he said. "The deficit has put pressure on the budget, pressure that many of us have helped to generate. It is obvious that we cannot ignore this anti-spending and anti-tax pressure, by allowing costly sur-

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American Farm Bureau President Robert Delano discusses agricultural policy with Pennsylvania Farmers' Association President Keith Eckel, following PFA's County President's Conference Wednesday in Mechanicsburg.

Extension adds manure mgmt. specialist

BY WENDY WEHR

LANCASTER — At most annual meetings of the county Extension associations, reviewing the program and staff accomplishments of the past year is the main order of business. But at the Lancaster County Annual Extension Association meeting on Thursday night, the focus turned to the upcoming year and the addition of a staff member to help farmers cope with the manure management problems of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

James McKeehen, Southeast Region Administrator for Penn State Extension, announced the appointment of a project associate for manure management. Mitchell Woodward, an agronomist and agricultural specialist, has accepted the position of aiding farmers with the burgeoning waste management problems in the Southeast.

Woodward, who grew up on a dairy farm outside of Middletown, Delaware, earned his master's degree in agronomy and extension education from the University of Maryland. Currently working as

an agricultural representative for the DuPont Corporation in North Carolina, Woodward says his concerns remain with the farm communities and peoples of the Chesapeake watershed.

"My great grandfather was a waterman," says Woodward. His family background and concern for the farmers of southeastern Pennsylvania will help him as he begins his new duties in March.

Controlling pollution in the Chesapeake Bay is important, whether it's animal waste, chemicals, or whatever," remarks Woodward. "Manure management is a big problem. If we can control it somehow, maybe we can hold back on some of the government regulations."

While Woodward will be working out of the Lancaster Extension office, he will be aiding farmers in all the southeastern counties where there are manure management problems. "I will work in the Susquehanna River valley where there is the largest concentration of dairy," sums up Woodward.

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Lancaster Farming Names New Editor

LITITZ — Lancaster Farming is pleased to announce the appointment of James H. Everhart as managing editor.

A Lancaster native, Everhart is a graduate of Conestoga Valley High School and Franklin and Marshall College.

He has 14 years experience as a writer and journalist, including nine years at The York Dispatch in York.

At the Dispatch, Everhart won a variety of state and national awards, covering a wide range of social and environmental issues, land use and municipal government topics.

After leaving York, he served as a newsman at The Associated Press in Albany, N.Y., returning to Lancaster in 1981. Since that time, he has worked as a writer and journalist at advertising agencies and other publications.

He lives in Lancaster with his wife and two children.



James H. Everhart

INSIDE this week's Lancaster Farming

Over-Order Pricing

Over-order pricing continues to receive attention from Pennsylvania dairymen this week. Members of several key farm organizations met in Harrisburg to discuss RCMA's role in negotiating for over-order prices. Turn inside for their comments following the meeting.

For more on over-order pricing turn to page A-27

FFA Week

Today marks the beginning of National FFA Week, a time to promote vocational agriculture and to applaud the accomplishments of tomorrow's farmers.

For stories about Lancaster County Star Farmer Floyd Huber and County Star Agribusinessman Dan Martin, turn to page F1

Wind Erosion

Though moving water gets most of the blame for soil erosion in the East, winter winds may be stealing more topsoil than we realize, says SCS soil conservationist Lee Bentz.

"When we can't see it, we generally don't recognize that it exists," says Bentz. But the brown snow we've been seeing this winter is proof-positive that wind is robbing farmers.

See an account of fly-away soil on page A-25

Pennfield Plans Mill

Pennfield Corporation, the largest Pennsylvania-based feed manufacturer, has announced plans to build a "state-of-the-art" feed mill in the Mount Joy Industrial Park.

The \$6.4 million plant will have the capacity to produce 60 tons of dairy and hog feed an hour.

For more on the new plant turn to page A-28