

Blair Co. Farmer's Assoc. meets membership goal

BY BETSY STITT
WILLIAMSBURG — Members of the Blair County Farmers Association learned that the group had surpassed its membership goal for the year by five persons at the association's recent spring meeting and banquet.

The group's membership goal was 363 and the final tally showed 368 members listed. The association has grown from 43 member families to 53. Blair County has always been a forerunner in membership, State Director Joe Johns reported. In 1973, PACMA Director Marlin Miller said, Blair County met their membership goal in just three days.

Audrey Kensinger, chairman of the ladies committee, reported that the group is planning two Ladies Day Out programs — one with Bedford County and one of their own. They are also seeking senior high students to attend the Youth Conference at Bucknell University.

Phil Pheasant reported that nine members went to Harrisburg to discuss several bills with state legislators. The members told legislators they would like the

amount of land foreigners can own reduced from 100 acres to 10 acres.

They also lobbied for a reduction in the number of employees small businesses must have to qualify for a loan. Under present legislation, businessmen must employ 25 people to be eligible; PFA would like that number reduced to five.

Pheasant also encouraged farmers to send more letters in support of returnable beverage

containers.

Charlie Mohn, a PFA member since 1958 and associate administrator since 1970, was the evening's keynote speaker. He was instrumental in organizing PFA in Blair County and reminded farmers that PFA's original purpose was to give farmers a voice in legislation. Now, hardly a day goes by that legislators do not call PFA

to see how a bill would affect farmers, he reported.

The highlight of the evening came when the charter members were recognized. Charter members honored included John Dean, the first county PFA president; Kenneth Ritchey; Byron Sollenberger; Richard Mattern; Willis Greaser; Joe Wineland; Allen Smith; Robert Dauberman; and

Bill Barroner. Other charter members who were not present include Sam Black, Ross Burket; Tom Claycomb, Frank R. Moore, D.A. Morrow, Are Hill Orchard; David D. Showalter, and Gilbert S. Watts.

The first board of directors included John Dean, Willis Greaser, Richard Mattern, Tom Claycome and Sam Black.

State Farmers Union members join NFU lobbying effort

WASHINGTON — Representatives of the Pennsylvania Farmers Union joined fellow National Farmers Union members from several states in a two-day visit to the Nation's capital.

On-going discussions of agricultural policy for the 1985 Farm Bill, plus the recent veto of the emergency farm credit legislation prompted Farmers Union to hold the fly-in and make the group's feelings known in person.

Pennsylvania Farmers Union President M. James Brown expressed the group's sentiment. "People are waking up to the farm situation," he said, "but real

understanding can only come about if farmers get off the farm and educate our neighbors—in the cities and especially in the Congress."

"The Washington Post is currently running a series of articles on the farm crisis," Brown continued. "Tuesday's early edition includes estimates by the American Bankers Association that we'll lose about twice as many every day. Farmers have to do whatever they can to reverse this trend—I think that coming to Washington is a good start."

Each Senator and Representative which the group visited was given the National Farmers Union

policy recommendations for the 1985 Farm Bill. Discussions emphasized such points as making the next farm bill a long-term law, limiting the wide discretionary authority of the Secretary of Agriculture maintaining base price supports and tying them to the cost of production, and expanding the authority of the Commodity Credit Corporation to include the power to negotiate long-term agreements with importing nations.

Farmers Union members also asked for reform of the deficiency payment system: first to increase the payments to reflect the difference between the market price and 100% of parity, and second to de-escalate payment so that more

of the benefits reach those middle 1/3 of the farmers who are struggling with the highest debt.

Finally, the group asked that the new farm bill include cross-compliance requirements for eligibility in any single commodity program and that the new bill contain supply management programs adopted through producer referenda.

Pennsylvania Farmers Union members attended a breakfast with representatives of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation on the 26th. Congressman Bob Edgar and Senator Arlen Specter each addressed the group on agricultural policy and answered questions.

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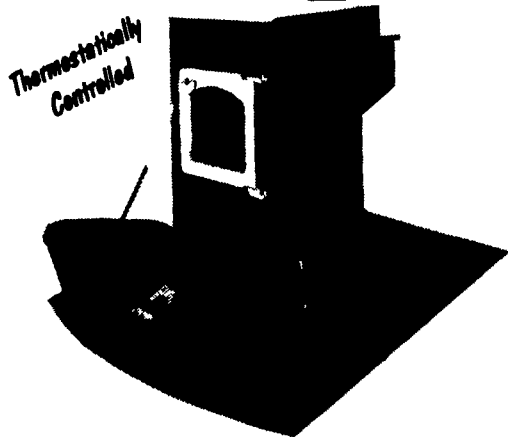
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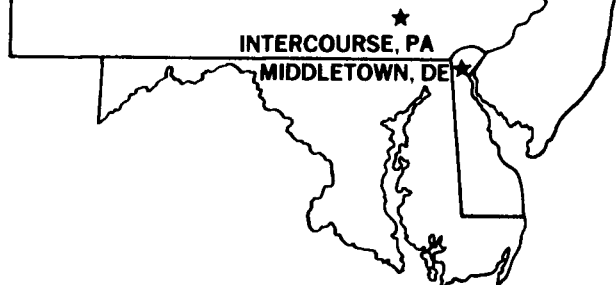
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