

# Cooper lists keys to successful cooperative

HARRISBURG — "I suggest the keys to operating a successful cooperative are basically the same as for any other business entity," commented J. Ward Cooper, president, Pennsylvania Association of Farmer Cooperatives (PAFC), at the association's annual meeting here.

Noting the annual meeting theme, "Cooperatives: The Force of The Future," Cooper outlined several key factors necessary for survival in today's economy.

Among those, Cooper mentioned (1) achieving the best possible results for investors, (2) emphasizing profitability, (3) taking an active role in the political

process, (4) cooperating with other companies involved in agriculture and (5) ensuring that products and services are good, valuable to the user and timely.

"Finally, I challenge you to be innovative. Cooperatives should be in the forefront of developing and using the latest technology," he said.

As examples, Cooper cited the squeezable jellies marketed by National Grape Cooperative with its Welch Foods brand and an aseptic package for applesauce used by Knouse Foods for its Musselman and Lucky Leaf labels.

Cooper was followed by Executive Secretary Kathy E. Gill,

who outlined goals for PAFC; 1986 is the organization's first full year with an executive secretary since the early '60s.

She said the PAFC "must examine its capital needs in relation to the services demanded by member cooperatives" just as cooperatives must examine their capital needs, equity requirements and return on member equity.

She also touched on the necessity of remaining politically involved. "And I am working to become known as the person to turn to for information on where the state's cooperatives stand on issues," she said.

Reminding the audience that PAFC has its roots in education, Gill applauded the association's track record - a high school youth program which celebrated its silver anniversary this year, a three-day program for cooperative couples "which has just hit its teens, a director's program that has passed the terrible twos and an infant employee program."

She reminded the audience that educational programs like those sponsored by PAFC "are not a substitute for in-house cooperative education. The two are complimentary, and both are imperative."

In closing, she told the audience that when "describing PAFC to outsiders, I do not say it is an



Some key participants in the Cooperative Month Kickoff Luncheon were, from left, State Rep. William Telek from Cambria County, Rep. Edwin Johnson of Blair County, State Ag Secretary Richard E. Grubb and Pennsylvania Rural Electric President William F. Matson.

organization that covers the state like a blanket. Rather, it is like a quilt...many patches, many colors, many sizes...all woven together by a common thread - cooperation."

Gill's remarks preceded a panel discussion on "Positioning for the Future," which featured Pat O'Donnell of National Grape, Joyce Bupp of the Middle Atlantic Division of Dairymen and Reider Bennett-White of the Baltimore Farm Credit Council.

O'Donnell, general manager, related how National Grape Cooperative responded to a grape surplus. The organization

developed frozen concentrates which met consumer desires for all natural, no preservative, products. Later, the firm introduced the squeezable jellies commented on by Cooper.

Bupp, a Dairymen director, focused on member relations and the importance of full, accurate and timely information. She credits such communications programs with satisfied, loyal members.

Finally, Bennett-White, chief operating officer, told the audience of 100 that political affairs is an ongoing process, necessary in both good and bad years.



Paul Mohn, past chairman of the Greenbelt consumer cooperative in the Washington, DC area, makes a point during his keynote address at the Cooperative Month Luncheon.

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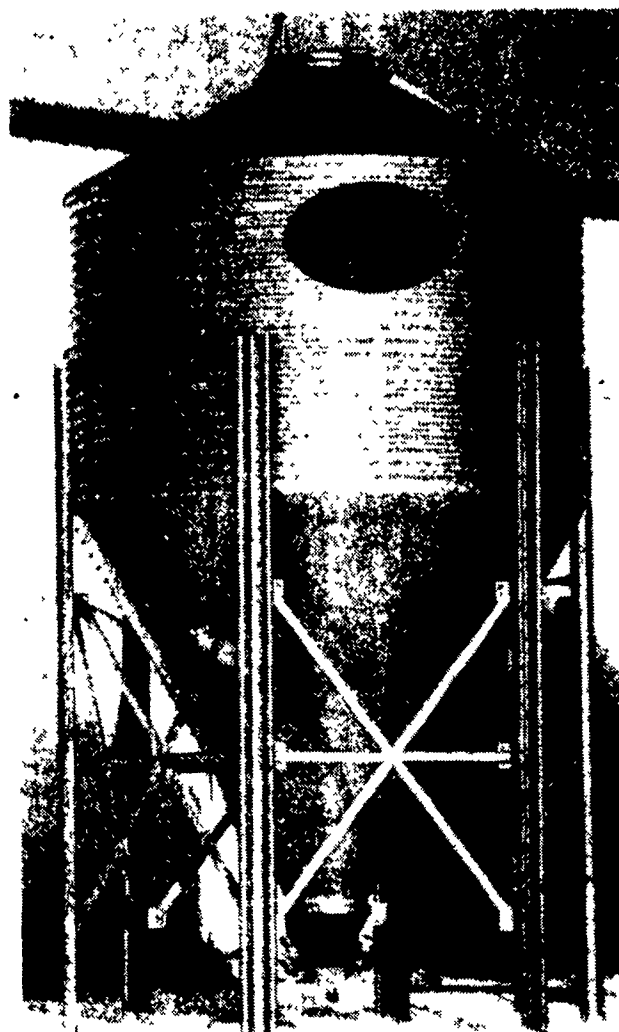


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