

Ag

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PPPC president Steve Burkholder presents Pork All-American plaque to Schuylkill Countian Lyndon Hepler.

Hepler named PPPC Pork All-American

BY JACK HUBLEY

HARRISBURG — Back in the 18th century, when Robert Burns penned the passage about "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men...", it's a safe bet that he had college freshmen in mind. While many aspiring collegians enter a four-year program with eyes riveted on the career of their dreams, they often find themselves choosing a different fork in the road along the way.

Take Lyndon Hepler, for instance. When this Schuylkill County farmer's son entered the Ag Mechanization program at Penn State in the mid-1970's, he had no intention of returning to the family farm in Pitman.

But when an adjoining farm came up for sale in his senior year, Hepler had to do some fast thinking. In the end, he chose the path that would lead to ownership of a 106-acre farm and a partnership with his father Raymond in the swine business.

This career move would also lead to his being named the Pork All-American for 1986. The 29-year-

(Turn to Page A38)

PFA members interrogate gubernatorial candidates

BY SUZANNE KEENE

HARRISBURG — Three of the candidates for Pennsylvania governor fielded farmers' questions about the positions they would take on agricultural issues if elected during a "Meet the Candidates" meeting in Harrisburg Thursday night.

About 140 farmers attended the Pennsylvania Farmers Association-sponsored event, where the candidates each gave opening statements and answered written questions submitted by members of the audience.

In their brief opening statements the candidates — Bob Casey, a former auditor general from Lackawanna County; Buck Scott, a businessman from Montgomery County; and Lt. Gov. Bill Scranton, also from Lackawanna County — each voiced their support of

Pennsylvania agriculture.

"I believe in the family farm," Casey said, noting that the answer to its survival lies in the land. If elected, Casey said he would sign a strong farmland preservation bill, support legislation returning control of marketing boards to farmers and, "put rural interests at the top of the list."

Scranton pledged to keep agriculture Pennsylvania's top industry. "Our farmers and our farmlands represent the very best resources we have. They must be protected and nurtured so they become an even greater factor in the state's economy, and through increased exports, in other economies."

Scranton listed among his priorities, farmland preservation, market development, and a reduced tax burden on farmers.

Scott said he would endorse legislation which would permit farmers to stay on the land and would guarantee that land values would remain secure for farmers forced out of the business.

He also strongly supported increased advertising of farm products. "I urge you not to lose sight of the importance of advertising and promotional efforts," he said.

In answering questions from the audience, the candidates each had two minutes to respond. Candidates were asked what measures they would take to curb the rate of farmland loss and to preserve the agricultural land base.

Both Casey and Scranton voiced support of Act 43, the Agricultural Area Security Law, which allows for development of "ag areas."

(Turn to Page A27)

LF herd buyout survey:

Dairymen doubt buyout will work

BY MARTHA GEHRINGER AND JAMES H. EVERHART

LANCASTER — By about a five to one margin, dairymen participating in a Lancaster Farming survey say they don't think the federal government's new herd buyout plan will work.

As one participant put it, "Farmers will continue to produce more and more milk as always."

The unscientific poll of readers also yielded surprising support for production controls, including a quota system similar to those in use in other countries.

And only about 20 percent of those responding indicated that they intend to enter a bid on the program — and most of those admitted their bids will be quite high.

For the most part, respondents indicated that they thought the buyout program would not succeed because the production it diverts would be offset by increased output in remaining herds. Dairymen who want to remain in business, they said, will increase production to compensate for declining prices.

Many thought there will be too few participants in the program because of its complex rules and regulations, which were announced too close to the sign-up deadline to allow adequate consideration by serious operators.

And some said they thought the program was misguided, in that it will attract only marginal producers, or those who were planning to retire anyway.

Of those planning to submit a bid, many said they thought the dairy outlook is too uncertain to continue. Most mentioned the low profitability and the continuing burden of debt as an important

reason to leave the industry; some noted that they were planning to quit anyway.

Of those who said they would not participate, most indicated they would not receive payment comparable to the value of their herds. They mentioned that they had worked years to build up a herd of top-quality cattle and hated to see those gains lost.

"I have been building a dairy herd since I was in high school," one respondent wrote, "and would not financially and mentally destroy them."

If chosen to participate in the program, dairymen who responded said they would get into beef production or hay and cash crops. Other options mentioned

included hogs, poultry, berries, vegetables, horses, wood, syrup and Christmas trees. A few said they would rent or sell the farm, and others said they might plan to re-enter dairying in 1990.

Almost three-fourths of the respondents favored a quota system, resembling the one in place in Canada, to cut surpluses. Others indicated increased promotion and greater reliance on market to set supply and demand.

By a five to one margin, respondents expected that there would be a lot of cheating in the program, mostly in the area of trading cows around prior to the slaughter deadline.

As one participant put it,

(Turn to Page A27)

Lancaster Farming wins ADADC 'Service' award



The American Dairy Association And Dairy Council, Inc. has presented its ninth annual "Service to Dairying Award" to Lancaster Farming. Convened for its 26th annual meeting at the Hotel Syracuse in Syracuse, the ADA/DC recognized this publication "for outstanding coverage of dairy promotion programs." ADA/DC President Raymond Johnson, left, presented the award to Lancaster Farming editor James H. Everhart at the organization's annual meeting banquet Wednesday night.

INSIDE this week's issue



The Pennsylvania Holstein Convention brings dairy features from around the state to this week's issue. In the above photo, Cold Springs Tony Delight accepts a hay handout from Chad and Amy Trimmer. Read their story on page A-18. Additional Holstein features can be found on pages A 20 and A-24.