

PFA members examine candidates

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However, the funds necessary to make this system work have not been available in the past, and both candidates support legislation introduced by Sam Morris that would make funding possible.

Scranton added: "If we're going to preserve farmland, we have to preserve farms." To do this, he suggests finding ways to help farmers and agribusinesses cut costs, and promoting a statewide marketing program.

Scott said the new governor will have to stand up to developers, noting, "I would...lean in that direction."

Farmers also queried the candidates on what they would do to reform the state's local real estate tax, which the farmers think is disproportionately placed on landowners.

All three candidates agreed that the tax system should be overhauled to distribute the tax burden more evenly. Scranton called for property tax reform and more income-based taxes.

Scott agreed that the tax burden should be moved to income, noting that he would advocate a slight increase in the state income tax.

Casey also said he would "move in the direction of smoothing out the burden at the local level."

In selecting a secretary of agriculture, Casey said he would search for a strong-willed, well-informed advocate of agriculture. "The secretary of agriculture will be from you and of you," he promised.

Scranton said he, too, would seek "someone who is clearly an advocate of agriculture." That person would be someone in the administration who knows farming from the grassroots level and who would help build agriculture in Pennsylvania.

If elected, Scott said he would "allow that person (the secretary of ag) to exercise a considerable amount of independent judgement."

When questioned about their support of legislation placing a mandatory deposit on bottles and cans, none of the candidates were willing to give their firm support. Scranton came closest to supporting this legislation, saying he is willing to seek a solution to the litter problem. He would not, however, promise to sign legislation calling for a mandatory

deposit.

Casey said he definitely would not sign such a bill because of the other interests involved in the issue.

Scott would also refuse such legislation. Instead, he sees advertising and promotion of anti-litter sentiment as an effective solution.

The candidates were asked what emphasis they would place on animal health programs. Scranton and Casey both said they strongly emphasize such programs and would provide adequate state funding for them. "Adequate state funding is basic and vital to this program," Casey said. Both stressed the importance of preventing and treating diseases like avian flu.

Scott said he is "favorably inclined" to animal health and that he would back increased work in that area.

When questioned about funding for the Department of Agriculture, Casey said he believes the scope of problems in rural America extends beyond the farm to include medical and educational concern, and that "should be reflected in a substantial Department of

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Lt. Gov. Bill Scranton responds to a question during the PFA-sponsored "Meet the candidates" banquet.

Herd buyout

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"Farmers are an ingenious group and have a share of cheats and liars."

Overall, almost half of those participating in the survey said they thought milk production will increase this year, by anywhere from one to 20 percent. One out of four thought it would remain the same and only about one in five thought it would drop. The rest expect output to drop for a time and then increase slowly.

Results of the informal survey will be forwarded to the appropriate authorities at PDA and USDA, although identities of the respondents, where apparent, will remain confidential.

The tremendous response to the survey request drew participants from throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and New York, and from areas of Massachusetts and Connecticut as well.

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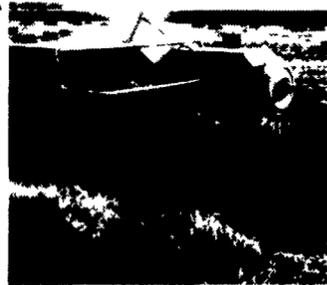
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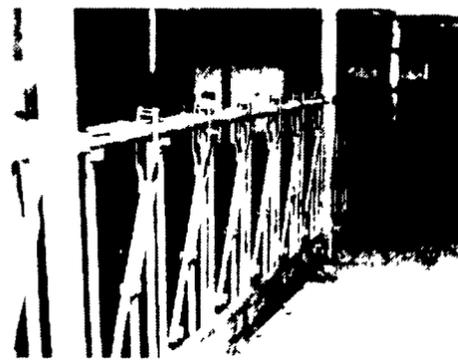
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