Grubb sees state role in marketing, health issues

YORK - State Ag Secretary Richard Grubb slipped away from budget hearings in Harrisburg temporarily February 27, to address the York Ag-Business seminar.

"This is a pleasant interlude in the budget hearings," quipped the Secretary, special guest speaker for the annual Chamber of Commerce farmer-businessmen confab

Speaking to the present general

depressed farm situation, Grubb noted an optimism of Pennsylvania farmers, saying he hears the philosophy of "we've been there before — we'll gut it out."

He cited a fairly stable ag economic situation in Pennsylvania, checking off such reasons as diversity of commodities, favorable soil and climactic conditions, proximity to large population centers, and overall lower debt loads than in other regions of the country.

Grubb sees two specific areas orders. where the state must play a partner in boosting agriculture: efforts, the state is helping fund marketing and animal health.

ticipated a state budget of \$300,000 products direct to consumers. to work with the Commerce In dealing with impr Department in promoting overseas livestock and poultry health, development of markets for Grubb sees the Commonwealth's Pennsylvania food products. present laws more a bust than a "Value added" items, especially boon. beef, pork, vegetables and fruits,

have proven popular in export

In more localized marketing some 60 retail and tailgate outlets, Toward the first goal, he an- enabling producers to sell their

In dealing with improved

"We have fifty-year-old, ar-



Secretary of Agriculture Grubb says Pennsylvania farmers are optimistic about tough times and plan to "gut it out" until the economy picks

chaic, laws for animal health problems," he lamented, calling for a complete review of the state's capabilities for dealing with livestock health emergencies and on-going concerns.

Farm City Week

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babies. Infants are especially prone to nitrate problems, since their bodies more readily convert nitrates to nitrites, which interfere with the oxygen level in the body. Blue Baby Disease is a direct result of infant nitrate contamination. Bottled water should be used for infant feeding and formula needs where sources are high in nitrates.

A last-minute speaker change put Charles Strehl, York City director of environmental services on the program. Strehl recounted the city's efforts to handle sewage sludge and recycle it through safe farmland application.

"Sludge is the by-product of clean water," Strehl explained, and must be biologically treated to destroy any disease-causing pathogens, before land application.

York city and surrounding municipalities generate between 200 to 300 tons of liquid sewage daily, or 15 tons of dry solids. Land application was the accepted method until the late 1970's, when reluctance by farmers to use the material in summer, and tighter DER regulations, compounded with other factors to convince city planners to construct a sludge incinerator. That brought other eventual problems, including escalating fuel costs and ash disposal.

Newer technologies, including improved water removal techniques, have since reduced quantities of sludge and hazards of its use, making the product again feasible for use on area farmland.

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