

## House Ag leaders praise Reagan move on inspections

WASHINGTON — Chairman Kika de la Garza, D-Tex., of the House Agriculture Committee said that President Reagan's decision to comply with Congressional requests to avoid disruption of the federal meat and poultry inspection program was a "welcome move that will benefit farmers, the processing industries and consumers."

De la Garza's comment came after the President sent Congress a formal request for release of \$5.7 million in previously appropriated funds for the inspection program. Since Congress had already appropriated the money for use in the current fiscal year, the President's action automatically made the funds available for inspections

which assure the wholesomeness of meat and poultry sold to consumers.

"I want to emphasize that this is not new spending. What has happened simply is that funds which Congress appropriated last year for meat and poultry inspection in fiscal 1986, with a proviso that they would be released when formally requested

and released," de la Garza explained. "This will be helpful for farmers, processing industries and consumers because it means that the Agriculture Department will now have to make sharp cuts in its meat and poultry inspection schedules in order to reach its Gramm-Rudman budget reduction totals for the remaining months of fiscal 1986."

Rep. Tony Coelho, D-Calif., Chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry, noted that furloughing inspectors to the extent threatened earlier would have had a sharp impact on the livestock and poultry economy because meat and poultry plants cannot operate without federal inspectors. With the decision to use the previously appropriated funds, officials have indicated that furloughs can be limited to three holidays when meat and poultry plants would normally be closed, Coelho said.

Administration action to release the \$5.7 million in previously appropriated funds was requested Feb. 20 in a letter signed by all Members of the subcommittee including Coelho and the Ranking Minority Member, Rep. Jim Jeffords, R-Vt. The request was also signed by de la Garza and

Rep. Edward R. Madigan, R-Ill., Ranking Minority Member of the full Agriculture Committee. The letter pointed out that the Food Safety and Inspection Service had been required under the fiscal 1986 Gramm-Rudman order to cut outlays by more than \$15 million and the agency had indicated that about \$9 million of the cuts would be found by furloughing agency personnel including inspectors.

Coelho said that on the basis of the department's earlier indications of furloughs which might be necessary during fiscal 1986, it had been calculated that the action might have cost processing workers \$100 million in lost wages and benefits through September because of reduced operations.

"Such action would not only harm industry workers, farmers and consumers, but it would fail to address the real issue of how best to get budget savings by modernizing the meat and poultry inspection system, and it could damage public confidence in this essential consumer protection program. We are glad the administration has agreed to take the far more practical course of using its already-available funds while it continues to search for effective ways to economize," de la Garza and Coelho said.

## PFA criticizes choice of new PDA deputy

CAMP HILL — Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association today expressed disappointment in the appointment of Kirk Wilson, mayor of Carlisle, as the new deputy secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, according to an announcement by the farm group's state president, Keith W. Eckel.

Wilson, recently elected Carlisle mayor, is a former radio and television reporter in Harrisburg. He spent three years on the Pennsylvania House of Representatives staff; worked for the Governor's Energy Council and the Governor's Press Office.

"It's a disappointment to me and members of the PFA Board that Governor Dick Thornburgh has

seen fit to turn his back on agriculture again," said PFA President Keith W. Eckel. "It seems as though the administration is going out of its way to disassociate itself from agriculture. That's disappointing, because there were many strong backers of the Governor in rural Pennsylvania."

The Pennsylvania Farmers' Association had unsuccessfully opposed the nomination of Agriculture Secretary Richard Grubb, because the farm organization did not believe he had the necessary agricultural experience to head the department.

"Our farmer members have adopted strong policy stating that the agriculture secretary and deputy secretary should have agricultural experience," Eckel

said, "because the administration looks to those persons for developing policies affecting the number one business (agriculture) in Pennsylvania."

PFA has received, reports Eckel, a public commitment from the Lt. Governor William Scranton and Robert Casey, the two major party endorsed candidates, to place persons with agricultural experience in positions of leadership in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

PFA is a general farm organization with more than 23,000 farm family members in Pennsylvania. It is also affiliated with the American Farm Bureau Federation, the largest general farm organization in the country.

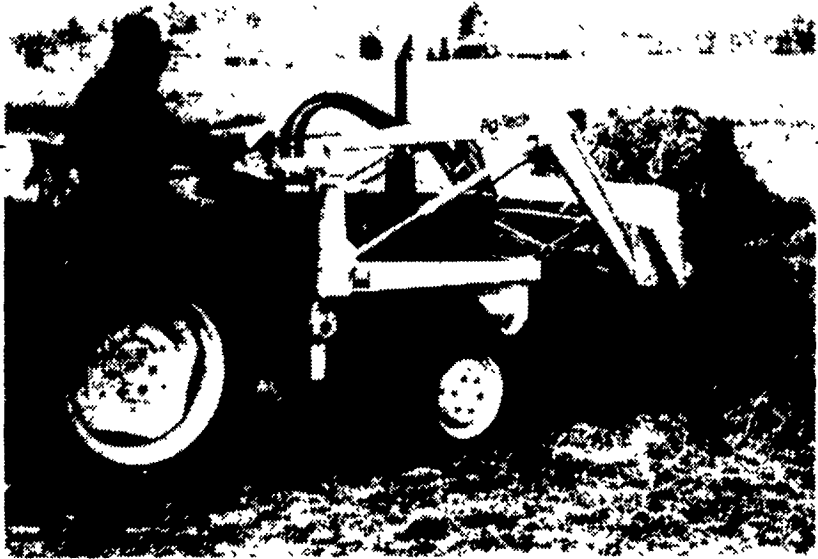
## Bee Keepers to meet

HONESDALE — The Wayne County Beekeepers Association will hold its first meeting of the year Thursday, March 20, 7:30 p.m., Extension meeting room, Court House, Honesdale.

Information will be presented on various aspects of spring management including inspection, supplemental feeding, disease control, and requeening. A supply of the U.S.D.A. bee diet, which is used as spring supplemental feed, can be secured at the meeting.

All interested persons are welcome to attend the Beekeeper Association meetings which are held the third Thursday evening of each month. While beekeepers are urged to join the association, it is not necessary to be a member to attend the educational meetings. 4-H and FFA members, as well as other young people interested in bees, are also welcome.

Ronald Fullem is the newly elected president of the association for 1986.



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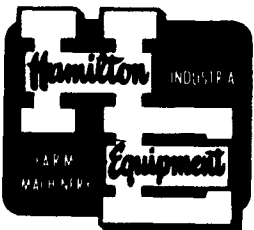
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