

# Farmers' Opinions

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is the recipient of the other end of the new computer technology. So there is nothing in our world from disarmament to foreign policy, to banking, to currency, to trade, to budget deficits that doesn't in some way include a farm issue.

"This shows how far the farmer has come and it is a recognition of how integrated our entire society has become with the overlapping and interlocking issues. No longer can any segment of our society live alone. And especially as farmers you are a part of every deliberation that goes in an individual congressman's office as well as in the White House itself," Gekas said.

Representative Samuel Morris, Chester County dairyman and chairman of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Agricultural Committee told of the current proceedings for agriculture in Harrisburg. "We have a busy season ahead in the Pennsylvania State Ag Committee," Morris said. "Several bills have already been in and out of the agricultural committee. The first bill to appropriate \$5 million through the Department of Agriculture will allocate to Pennsylvania State University funding for Extension Service and research. This will partly make up for the cut in the federal funding for Extension Service," Morris said. This bill passed the House last week without a negative vote.

Another bill out of the ag committee is the new commodity marketing bill, which will enable the advertising committees representing the producers of various agricultural commodities. Greater decision-making authority over the expenditure of moneys for marketing and research. These moneys were contributed entirely by the self-imposed assessments on the producer farmers. "As you may remember," Morris said, "the restraints placed on these boards by the general councils opinion in 1985 caused the apple growers to give up their participation in the program all together." This bill passed the House and is now in the Senate.

The land preservation bill that provides state money to be passed out to the counties to purchase conservation easements on farms has also been introduced. "It is rather costly," Morris said. "And we may have to cut down and accept less money if we can get it. But I have hopes of getting this money because it's the only sure way to preserve agricultural land in southeast Pennsylvania where

the pressure for development is very heavy."

On local property, Morris said farmers are paying a disproportionate share. Local government bodies and school districts should have the option and flexibility of determining the mix of property and income tax. A bill is now before the House Finance Committee that would accomplish this. The Animal Health and Diagnostic Bill was reported out of committee last week and was referred to the Appropriations Committee. In summary Morris said I believe we can be optimistic about Pennsylvania's agriculture, our number one industry.

In the legislative breakfast Thursday morning, Keith Eckel, president of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, urged the farmers and congressmen to resist any efforts to make major changes in the 1985 Farm Act until it has had a chance to work. Noting that the programs under the 1985 farm law have barely been in operation a year, Eckel urged legislatures to give it time to achieve its goals of improved farm income, reduced surplus stocks and increased agricultural exports. "One of the biggest threats this farm program faces is the premature condemnation its getting from those persons who would like to see farmers close the borders to imports and exports," Eckel said. "Other people would like to make farmers more dependent on government. Farm programs in the past have suffered from continual meddling before they have had a chance to work or fail. That's happening now to the 1985 Food Security Act," Eckel said.

The PFA president told law makers that while the 1985 farm law is not perfect, it is a step toward a more market-based agriculture. We believe the farm program is moving U.S. agriculture in the right direction. Let's give the 1985 farm program a chance to succeed or fail before we send farmers through another torturous year trying to figure out what the government is going to do next.

Turning to other issues concerning farmers, Eckel said PFA supports adoption of a constitutional amendment to require a balanced federal budget. PFA also believes that spending cuts to balance a budget should be shared by all federal programs including entitlement programs.

Concerning the Reagan administration proposals for the upcoming farm budget, Eckel said



Farmers At Legislative Banquet.

PFA opposes plans to drastically limit farm program payments to each farmer and to increase annual cuts in program commodity target prices. Agricultural credit is once again a high priority item, Eckel also told congressmen. "Because our members borrow

from various sources of credit and hold varying amount of debt, we are working on numerous ag credit initiatives," he said. "They include providing help for the farm credit system, which addresses all its problems and serves the best long-term interests of the system's

borrowers. We also support the creation of a secondary mortgage market for agriculture to increase sources of credit," Eckel said. "And we support long-term debt rightoffs for banks and sufficient funding for the Farmers' Home Administration.

## PFU Testifies In Favor Of Accelerated Milk Payments

MESHOPPEN — The Pennsylvania Farmers Union testified for accelerated milk payments to New York State Milk Producers at a milk hearing in Syracuse, N.Y. last week.

The hearing was called by Assemblyman Bill Brackman, chairman of the New York State Assembly agriculture committee. The agriculture committee is having a total of four hearings throughout the Empire State listening to views on milk and dairy problems.

Pennsylvania Farmers Union and the Northern Tier Farmers Union Milk Co-op's testimony was presented by Arden Tewksbury of Meshoppen.

Tewksbury testified in favor of a statewide milk licensing system in place of the present county-by-county system that currently exists in New York State.

Tewksbury strongly urged the committee to have language in the New York dairy bill which would "speed-up" the milk payments to dairy farmers. Tewksbury urged the advance payments dates be changed from the 10th of the month

to the 5th of the month, and after the bill is law for one year then the payment date should be changed to the 1st day of the month. The dairy leader also urged the new bill to require dairy cooperatives to adhere to these payment dates.

The governor and the attorney general's office of New York State are drafting new legislation to cover the milk licensing probe in New York State. The legislation is also geared to improve payment dates to dairy farmers as well as improving the milk security fund in New York State.

Currently, the New York State law does not require milk handlers to post bonds, and there is approximately \$3.5 million in the New York State milk Producer security fund.

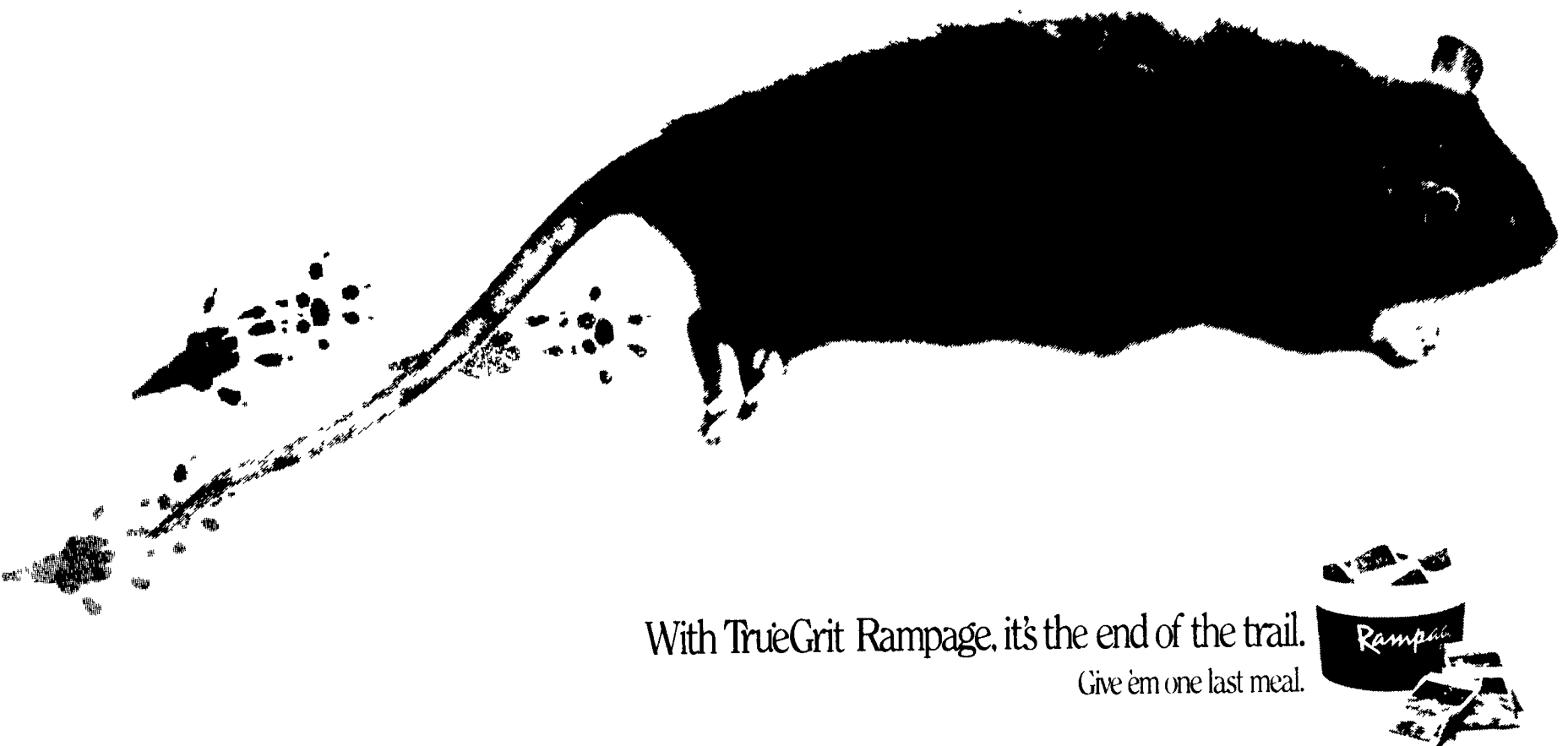
Tewksbury claims the present law gives dairy farmers inadequate protection and P.F.U. is urging the New York law to conform closer with the Pennsylvania law.

P.F.U. and Northern Tier are recommending that milk handlers who purchase milk from dairy farmers or dairy co-operatives

should be required to post security bonds to cover 75 percent of their exposure on milk purchased.

If a milk handler is unable to post bonds at the 75 percent level then they should have the option of bonds at 40% of their milk purchases plus contributing 3 cents per hundredweight into an individual handler security fund. Tewksbury told the committee: the present law in New York State leaves dairy farmers in a precarious position and must be corrected.

Tewksbury urged the committee and the legislators to move with caution as they develop new legislation to replace the licensing laws in the Empire State. He concluded by stating while we favor statewide licensing for milk handlers, we do so only if the new law prohibits all milk handlers from selling milk below their cost of operation.



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