

Ag Leaders Share

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and reported on the expansion of this hobby and business.

-Richard Denison, general manager of Member Service Corporation Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, who explained the financial management programs offered by PFA.

-Raymond Johnson, president of ADADC and a member of the National Dairy Board, who explained the national and local milk promotion programs.

Crawford expressed a concern that politicians have in the past

ignored or excluded the farm press from events and announcements. He referred to the news conference Candidate Casey held in Lancaster in regard to the Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act to which the campaign staff forgot to invite the farm press. "It wasn't on purpose," Crawford said. "But it was a grave omission. We have information we need to get out to farmers. And we need to receive from the press the things they hear when they are out among the farmers." Crawford said this was doubly important because he

perceives the farm press to have more credibility with their readers than is enjoyed by the general press.

To change the perceived credibility gap between the farm community and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, an aggressive involvement in leadership is forthcoming from PDA. "We should be agriculture's number one advocates and spokesmen," Crawford said. "The policy direction for agriculture is going to come from PDA. And to form that policy we are going to seek a lot of input from agricultural leaders around the state.

Dr. Hood said that to be a force in the food, agriculture and forestry market place, a lot of cooperation between states, counties and sectors of the public must be achieved. "With 25 percent of the nation's people living in the northeast within a day's drive of production agriculture, the markets are close. But markets change with an aging population and the changed eating habits. We in agriculture need to change to meet the market," Hood said.

In addition, Hood said we need to begin to talk about urban agriculture. "Everyone in Pitt-

sburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Lancaster eat and consume the products of agriculture. And almost everyone has a green plant on their property. We must get across to urban and suburban legislators that food and agriculture are very important to their constituents. We must emphasize the health and vitality—the quality of life in the urban setting that is very much linked to agriculture. I firmly believe the Extension services are here to serve all citizens of the state. We must move away from the mentality that Cooperative Extension is only for farmers."

Hood cited the example of the gardening program in the city of Philadelphia where about 5,000 families are manning 450 garden sites that occupies a total of about 60 acres if you add all the small plots together. "These people not only produce food for their needs, they also have a reason to be proud," Hood said. "It's fascinating to interact with these people to see the sociological as well as the economic benefits of the program.

(Additional speakers' views to be reported next week.)

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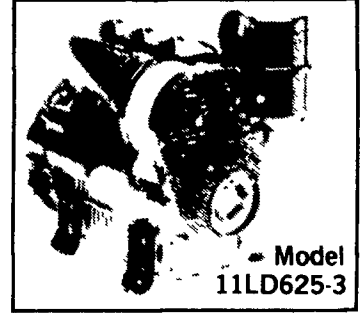
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