

# Goodling Seeks Better Farmer — Worker Relations

**BIGLERVILLE** — Congressman Bill Goodling (PA-19), member of the House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Labor, south to improve relations between local farmers and their migrant workers at a hearing held by the House Subcommittee on Labor Standards in Biglerville on Monday.

"I believe it is very important that we develop a non-adversarial relationship between those farmers providing migrant workers with jobs and the workers themselves," Goodling said in his remarks at the hearing. Allegations of harassment of farmers have been made recently by local growers as migrant

workers and their representatives have sought to make claims under a federal law protecting migrant farm workers.

The law, the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, provides workers with the right to file claims against farmers who may be in violation of the housing and work condition provisions of the law. Farmers argued that the workers and their representatives are using the letter of the law to harass growers, which is one of the problems the law was intended to correct.

The hearing was held at Biglerville High School Monday, July 13, 1987. Congressman Goodling

arranged for the special field hearing after receiving a number of letters and complaints from both sides of this issue.

In an opening statement Goodling said, "Many times when we pass legislation in the Congress of the United States, the intent of that legislation is not always carried out through the regulations that are written or, in some instances, the way the programs are administered.

"Recently, I was asked to be the keynote speaker at an Agricultural Labor-Management Development Symposium. I was not given any specifications in relationship to

what I was supposed to say and, therefore, spoke of happenings in my district according to letters and telephone calls received from my farmers.

"I indicated that unless those who are representing migrant workers, supported by grants from the Government of the United States, acted in a conciliatory and helpful rather than adversarial manner, farm ownership may be destroyed and, therefore, no jobs would be available for farmworkers.

"After giving my address, I was approached by an attorney for Friends of Farmworkers who was disappointed with my remarks and indicated that they have developed an excellent relationship with the farmers in my area. That is totally opposite to the information I have heard from my constituents, who speak of a relationship of intimidation and fear rather than cooperation.

"Several days after the Symposium, I also received an unbelievable note from a local man of the cloth, although he didn't sign it in that manner nor do I believe a minister would write that kind of note. He too asserted that Friends of Farmworkers were in touch with the feelings and views of the producers.

"I came to the conclusion, since

the intent of the Act was to make sure farmworkers would not be abused and, at the same time, employers have the benefit of the government carefully explaining to them what the law provides and working closely with the government and worker representatives in a non-adversarial manner to bring about compliance, it would be beneficial to have the Committee hear from people who are administering and attempting to comply with Congress' intent.

"Serving with Congressman Bill Ford on the Interstate Migrant Education Council, we are the two Members of Congress who most closely track the welfare of migrant children and, of course, this has us dealing closely with their parents. Therefore, I am very concerned about how these people live as they travel across the United States.

"It has been my experience in the 19th Congressional District that the relationship between farmworkers and their employers becomes more of a family relationship rather than an employer/employee relationship. Therefore, I believe it is very important that we develop a non-adversarial relationship between those providing the jobs and those performing the tasks, as well as those representing the workers, to protect both."

## State's Apple Growers Approve Checkoff

**HARRISBURG**—Following legislative changes that give growers more control over marketing programs, Pennsylvania apple producers have voted for a five-year program to promote the sale of Pennsylvania apples. Under the program, producers will pay 7 cents for each bushel of apples sold for fresh market and 4 cents per hundred pounds on apples sold for processing. That assessment is expected to raise \$250,000 annually to support a marketing program administered by a 10-member board made up of affected apple growers.

The vote followed action by Governor Robert P. Casey, who worked for recent amendments to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Commodities Act. Those amendments returned control of commodity marketing programs to producers. When the changes were

signed into law on May 6, they fulfilled a campaign commitment by Governor Casey.


Agriculture Secretary Boyd E. Wolff indicated producer-controlled marketing programs hold the key to success for Pennsylvania farmers. "Apple growers know what's good for apple growers, so there is no doubt this program will address the concerns and needs of Pennsylvania producers," said Secretary Wolff.

Producers with 500 or more apple trees cast ballots in a referendum from June 23 to July 8. The program was approved by 59 percent of 171 affected producers. Those favoring the program produce 74 percent of the apples produced by the group voting. "Yes" votes were cast by 101 producers.

State Agriculture Secretary Boyd E. Wolff called for the vote in June, after 11 growers and the

State Horticultural Association (representing over 260 producers), testified in favor of the program during a hearing in Harrisburg.

In the spring of 1985, producers decided to get rid of an apple marketing program after a legal opinion under the Thornburgh administration put the program under control of the Agriculture Department. The new program is controlled by a 10-member board made up of 9 apple producers and chaired by Secretary of Agriculture Boyd E. Wolff.



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