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# Legislators Have Budget Task Cut Out For Them

BY REP. JOHN E. BARLEY

If Pennsylvania legislators have one challenge in the formulation of the 1988-89 state budget, it's to ensure that the final plan reflects the importance of agriculture in the Keystone state.

Unfortunately, the budget proposed this week by Governor Casey seems to lack that understanding.

A state which has agriculture as its leading industry has a great opportunity to encourage significant economic development through that industry. However, based on my reading of the governor's budget proposal, he has failed to seize that opportunity.

One good agricultural development proposal in the governor's budget is drastically underfunded. An Agricultural Entrepreneur Program to provide low-interest loans to agribusiness promoting new uses of farm products is a very worthy legislative, but will accomplish little on a statewide budget of

\$1 million.

With the exception of a \$1 million increase for food banks, there are no major increases for existing agricultural programs contained in the budget proposal.

The vast potential for economic development through agriculture could -- if adequately cultivated -- produce thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in revenues. And, like any economic development, it could provide significant returns for the state in the form of tax revenues.

The governor is missing an important opportunity when he fails to propose adequately funded initiatives that encourage farmers to expand their operations. Areas of great potential for expansion include on-farm processing, energy generation and innovative marketing.

Farm projects to turn animal waste into energy could provide great promise to not only farmers

but all Pennsylvanians if adequately encouraged by the state. Such energy production would be environmentally and economically beneficial.

I believe the governor's budget also misses the boat in failing to encourage significant expansion of agricultural exports: a step which would be beneficial to Pennsylvania farmers and Americans concerned about the (in)balance of trade.

As a fiscal conservative, I don't advocate handouts for the agricultural community, just an opportunity to expand its existing potential. If adequately funded, agricultural development efforts will pay handsome dividends, not just to Pennsylvania farmers, but all citizens of the commonwealth.

## What's In Your Well Water?

The Adams County Conservation District has made arrangements through the Department of Environmental Resource State Bureau of Laboratories for reduced rates for water testing. The following group tests will be offered. An order form is on the other side of this paper. The Adams County Conservation District and the Adams County Extension Service are planning a Water Quality Information Fair this spring.

GROUP:

1. **Bacteria— \$8.00-** The analysis of water for bacteria of the coliform group determines the sanitary quality. Shallow wells and springs are most commonly affected. It is recommended that springs or wells used for drinking water be checked at least annually. According to DER 60% of the wells in PA are contaminated with bacteria.

2. **Nitrite Nitrogen, Nitrate Nitrogen, Ammonia Nitrogen, and Chloride— \$11.00-** Nitrate most commonly enters the groundwater in farming areas. In excessive amounts it can cause illness in infants. Chloride is accumulated through long term contamination with septic effluent.

3. **Iron, Manganese, Aluminum, and Sodium— \$11.00-** Iron and manganese can impart an off taste to the water. Sodium may be a minor problem if one has high blood pressure. Manganese can also cause mechanical problems in water lines in chicken houses.

4. **pH, Alkalinity, and Hardness— \$6.00-** Low pH indicates acid water which could dissolve metal plumbing systems thus adding harmful levels of metal to water.

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