

# PDA Lists 1988 Accomplishments

## MARKETING AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT:

-- Through the Agricultural Entrepreneur Development Program, the Department of Agriculture distributed nearly \$1 million in matching grants to twenty-one small agribusinesses in nineteen counties. These grants helped construct or expand processing operations that add value to agricultural commodities produced in Pennsylvania. The program has created 276 new jobs.

-- The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture reported record agricultural and food exports of \$203 million. This was a 21 percent increase over the prior year. (NOTE: The reporting period in this case is a federal fiscal year and figures come from USDA. The reporting period discussed ended on Sept. 30, 1987. Figures for the period ending Sept. 30, 1988 will not be compiled by USDA until May.)

-- The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture helped vegetable growers establish the Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing Program under Act 1 of 1987. This program is completely controlled by growers.

-- The Department of Agriculture approved \$2.5 million for agricultural research projects for fiscal year 1988-89. This is an increase of \$1.5 million over the previous year.

-- In conjunction with Rotary International and the Brothers Brother Foundation, the Department of Agriculture helped distribute free seed corn to farmers who suffered severe drought damage in the summer of 1987.

## PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY:

-- The Department of Agriculture developed a voluntary registry for citizens who have medical hypersensitivity to pesticides. Through this program, citizens receive advance notification of pesticide applications on lands adjacent to their homes.

-- The Department of Agriculture developed a voluntary program to prevent and control Salmonella enteritidis in chicken egg producing flocks.

-- When severe drought conditions led to the appearance of aflatoxin in grains, the Department of Agriculture began testing samples in Pennsylvania. This testing determined corn in Pennsylvania was not contaminated to the high levels detected in Midwestern states.

-- The Department of Agriculture implemented a new certification program to permit kennel owners to vaccinate their own animals against rabies. In the first year of this new program, 380 kennel owners were certified.

-- The Department of Agriculture increased Quality Assurance Inspections on amusement rides. There were 40 times more inspections in 1988 than in the prior year. These increased inspections force ride owners to make safety improvements to machinery before amusement rides can be opened to the public.

## EFFICIENCY ACHIEVEMENTS:

-- After developing a new donated food distribution system through a pilot project, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture implemented the new system statewide in 1988. Through this new system, food is delivered to schools and other recipient agencies which had to arrange pickup from warehouses in the past. This new system saves transportation costs and improves efficiency. It was

developed by the Bureau of Government Donated Foods and it stands as a model for all other states.

-- The Department of Agriculture disbursed the dairy herd at the Danville State Farm and leased that farm to a private citizen. Operation of the Danville Farm had been subsidized by ten other state farms. Leasing the Danville Farm helps protect the future of the state farm program. State-owned farms in Pennsylvania produced record revenues in 1988 after several years of operating at substantial losses.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION:

-- Through the bureau of Weights and Measures the Department of Agriculture inspected retail sales of baler twine. This project exposed mislabelling and short lengths. In some cases, buyers were shorted as much as 15 percent. Mislabelled twine was ordered out of stores as a result of this investigation.

-- Through an inspection of retail sales of polyethylene sheeting, the Bureau of Weights and Measures determined consumers were not getting what they paid for. This probe resulted in a multi-state recall of polyethylene sheeting by a chain of retail stores (Busy Beaver Stores). The Department of Agriculture is proposing new regulations to promote fairness in purchases of polyethylene sheeting.

-- The Department of Agriculture initiated a sampling project to inspect orange juice products. This inspection determined some producers were diluting orange juice. Violators were warned for first offenses and prosecuted for further infractions. Resampling demonstrates consumers have been protected by this project.

## LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR AGRICULTURE IN 1988

-- ACT 63 provides reimbursement to farmers who have suffered livestock damage from coyotes. This act also permits small municipalities to qualify for grant monies by developing joint dog control programs.

-- ACT 86 amends the Crime Code and makes agricultural vandalism, the intentional damaging of farm property, a criminal offense.

-- ACT 122 authorized the Department of Agriculture to license and regulate poultry dealers and transporters and establish cleanliness standards for poultry transportation. The law will help control the spread of poultry diseases. The law also provides for licensing and regulation of the production of ethyl-alcohol (ethanol) by the Department of Agriculture. Ethanol was previously regulated by the Liquor Control Board.

-- ACT 141 will, after approval by voters, reform property taxes that are a burden to farmers who pay substantial amounts of property taxes because they own large parcels of land. This tax reform law will also abolish nuisance taxes.

-- ACT 148 creates an Animal Health and Diagnostic Commission to oversee animal health problems, direct research dollars, coordinate laboratories and advise on animal health policy.

-- ACT 149 preserves farmland through a purchase of development rights program. Property easements will control development on farms for 25 years or for perpetuity. The act will protect the economy by saving vital farmland. In addition, it will preserve open space for wildlife, groundwater resupply, and for tourists.

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