

# Farm Forum

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aroused by an activity sponsored by the FFA. For some this gave the incentive to complete high school, and for others it meant they enrolled in college. Are we ready to say that having one student complete their high school career, or to pursue a college degree, is not worth \$33,000?

I would urge Governor Casey to restore this line item budget cut. If he does not, then I would urge that the State Legislators restore the cut.

G. Lowell Morton,  
Advisor  
Annville-Cleona FFA Chapter

Editor,

I am extremely disappointed with Governor Casey's decision to eliminate funding for the FFA in his 1990-1991 budget proposal. I feel that the Governor does not understand the importance of our state's number one industry — the industry of agriculture.

Where would we be without agriculture today? In the days of George Washington, the father of American agriculture, everyone had to farm simply to survive. Today, due to the advanced technological advances, one farmer can feed over 142 people. Because of these developments, agriculture is no longer "just farming." It is horticulture, communications, soil science, and over 200 other career opportunities.

In-Vitro fertilizations allow agriculturists to create better

breeds of animals, and hydroponics allows the growing of plants without the use of soil. This is what makes agriculture Pennsylvania's number one industry with over 26% of our state's careers. Why should we deny Pennsylvania students the right to learn about this fascinating and diverse industry?

High school agriculture classes are supplemented by membership in the National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America. The FFA teaches students to apply what they have learned in agriculture class to real-life situations by having members compete in various contests ranging from public speaking to agriculture mechanics and from wildlife identification to land and soil judging.

Since 1928, the FFA, one of the nation's largest youth organizations, has been providing students with the opportunity to win many different awards, chances for interstate and international travel, contests, a chance to meet their state legislative leaders, and so much more. The FFA combines what students learn in high school agriculture classes with award and leadership programs which give members self-confidence. It's more than just a club, it's an important part of every school day.

I certainly hope that Governor Casey will reconsider his decision to eliminate funding for the FFA. After all, agriculture is the one

industry that is essential to the survival of the human race. Without it, we would not exist. High school agriculture students can, in a sense, hold the future of the human race in their hands.

Please don't allow Governor Casey to eliminate this funding. Keep agriculture Pennsylvania's number one industry. Our future depends on it.

Rebecca K. Stumpf  
5-year FFA member

Editor:

We are writing concerning the recent cut-backs Governor Casey has suggested for this year's budget. The money that Governor Casey is cutting had been earmarked for the regional FFA dairy shows (many of our students at Big Spring High School have participated in the South Central FFA Dairy Show), paying for students who participate in the Eastern States Exposition (Mike Cornman, sophomore at Big Spring attended last year), partial support for the national judging contest teams, secretarial help for the FFA Executive Secretary and matching funds for the salary and travel for the FFA Foundation Executive Director.

Recently, the South Central FFA Dairy Show committee met. Due to the budget cuts, we had to make adjustments in our budget so it would be balanced, we had to cut the premiums for the FFA members. The premiums helped the students recover the costs of entering as well as serve as a reward for their efforts in showing the animals. The budget cuts do have a major impact on the FFA members in the South Central Region and we have already seen the effect of the cuts.

We urge the members of the

agricultural community in Pennsylvania to take a stand and help the Pennsylvania Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, the Pennsylvania FFA Foundation and the members of the Pennsylvania FFA Association make everyone aware of the importance of agriculture in Pennsylvania.

Vicki Basehore  
Ag. Ed. Teacher  
Big Spring H.S.  
FFA Advisor

Editor:

Governor Casey's proposed budget cuts, eliminating the Pennsylvania FFA Foundation funding of \$33,000, will only hinder further efforts in agricultural education.

Agricultural education not only affects students in high school, but has far reaching implications as their leadership skills developed in FFA participation extend into their adult years and they lead their communities. Many of today's leaders both in and out of the agricultural sector received their start in an agricultural education program and an active FFA chapter.

As a former agriculture student and now an agricultural teacher, I have watched as our support system (regional coordinators who were specialists in agriculture) have dwindled as people retire and their positions are not renewed. This trend continues even now at PDE as our program specialist's position has dropped to half time agricultural education.

The agricultural education program has suffered enough cut-backs. It is time to say enough is enough and put our money into our future. Let's not fall short on a

proven program that is working so well in the educational system.

Kathleen M. Jones  
Ag. Ed. Teacher,  
Lower Dauphin H.S.  
& FFA Advisor

Editor,

I am writing concerning the recent Casey cut-backs suggested for this year's budget. As you know, he has cut the funding we get from the Department of Agriculture from \$33,000 down to zero. Over the past thirty years, the Department of Education has also drastically cut funding for staff support.

Thirty years ago the Department of Education had thirty plus people dealing with agriculture education, including two full time positions coordinating both the agricultural education activities and the FFA activities throughout the state. Since then the Department of Education has bit by bit diluted their support for agricultural education. When Charles Lebo retired, they left the only position they maintained for agricultural education open for two years without filling it. They finally filled his position and again "watered" it down. Larry Reading now has that job but he may only devote 50% of this time to agricultural education and only 5% of that may be spent on FFA activities.

With agricultural income grossing over thirty five billion dollars for the state of Pennsylvania, with agriculture in Pennsylvania being the largest in the Northeast, with Pennsylvania's agricultural food processing industry being first in the nation, with agriculture being the largest employer in the state of

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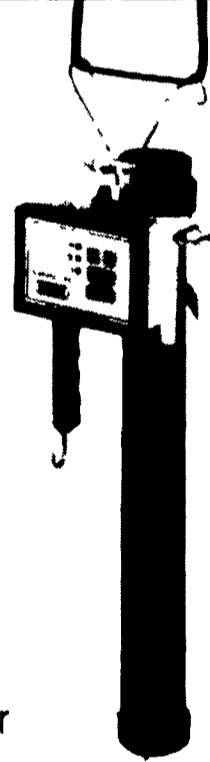
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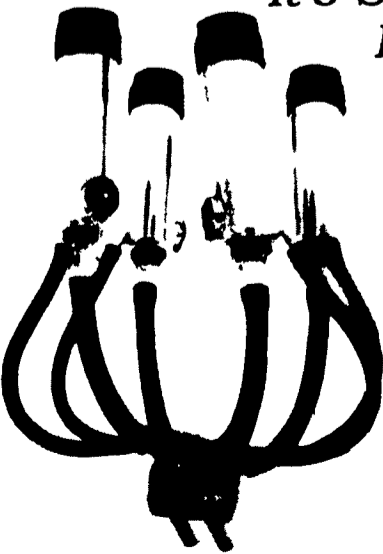
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