

Wolff Makes Animal Rights Statement To US House Ag Subcommittee

Editor's Note: Boyd Wolff, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture addressed the US House of Representatives Ag Subcommittee on "The Farm Animal and Research Facilities Protection Act" (H.R. 3270). Here is the text of his statement.

Chairman Brown, ladies and gentlemen. I want to thank you for this opportunity to share with you some of our experience in Pennsylvania in regards to the agricultural community and animal rights activities.

My name is Boyd Wolff. I am Pennsylvania's Secretary of Agriculture under Governor Robert P. Casey. Before joining Governor Casey's Cabinet I was a dairy farmer in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, just east of Pittsburgh.

The issue of animal rights has been brought to the public's attention through vandalism, bombings, and threats against both family farmers and medical researchers. While proponents of animal rights may feel they have noble intentions, I believe farmers have a proven track record, as well as a vested interest, in taking the best possible care of their animals. It is economic nonsense for people who raise animals for their livelihood to use poor methods of nutri-

tion, housing, and care. To protect farmers against zealots who act to further their cause, Pennsylvania enacted legislation creating the offense of agricultural vandalism. Governor Casey signed this legislation into law in 1988.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania supports the passage of similar legislation at the federal level. Congressman Stenholm's proposed legislation is a step in the right direction, however, we feel it could be strengthened by enacting tougher penalties than those included.

Our own agricultural vandalism law defines agricultural vandalism as the offense of a person who "intentionally or recklessly defaces, marks or otherwise damages the real or tangible personal property of another."

Depending on the degree of damage perpetrated, agricultural vandalism ranges from being a third degree misdemeanor for pecuniary loss to a felony of the third degree if the loss is in excess

of \$5,000.

Animal rights activists have vandalized farm operations and research facilities in pursuit of their cause. Veal and poultry operations in particular have been targets of their acts. Animals have been released, slogans have been painted on walls, and equipment has been destroyed.

Tough penalties send the message to animal rights activists that the destruction of property and invasion of other peoples lives and livelihoods are not justifiable actions.

In our opinion, animal rights activists are not advocating the humane treatment of animals. Instead, they advocate the total non-use of animals. They say all farmers mistreat their animals. This is simply not true.

In fact, with only a single exception during my three and a half years as Pennsylvania's Secretary of Agriculture, every case of animal abuse reported to my office involved pet owners. Most of these people did not intend to

abuse their animals. But, unlike farmers, they had never learned the proper ways to take care of the animals they bought.

I agree with U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan in his criticism of the efforts to end medical research with animals -- "these people are on the wrong side of morality."

Therefore, I am asking you, on behalf of Pennsylvania's largest

industry, to unreservedly condemn the use of violence and intimidation which has been funded by many animal rights organizations by enacting H.R. 3270, and including stiff penalties to deter these crimes.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. I will be glad to answer any questions that the Members of the U.S. Subcommittee may have.

Milking Face-Off

TOWSON, Md. — The Harrisburg Senators join with dairy farmers of the Mid-Atlantic to honor the dairy industry on Friday evening, July 27 at Riverside Stadium.

Celebrity cow milking teams from WGAL TV (Lancaster) and radio station WNNK FM (Harrisburg) will face-off just prior to the game. Pete McTee of WMPT TV (Harrisburg) will serve as the master of ceremonies. Judging the contest will be Pennsylvania Sec-

retary of Agriculture Boyd Wolff, Secretary Wolff will also throw out the first ball of the game.

Fans will be treated to a giant sundae compliments of the local county dairy promotion group. The first 1,500 fans to enter the gate will receive high quality equipment bags imprinted with the Harrisburg Senators logo, MAMMA logo, and the words: "Milk. It Does A Body Good."

Game time is 7:05 p.m. Events will begin prior to the game.

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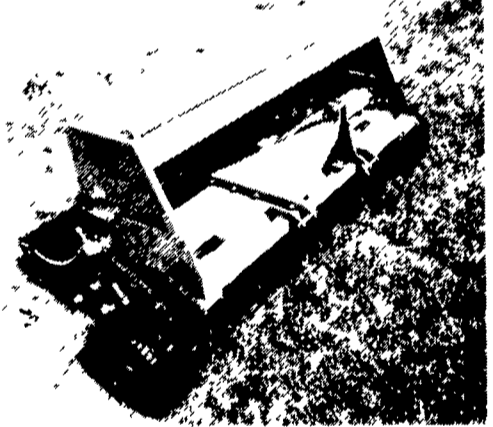
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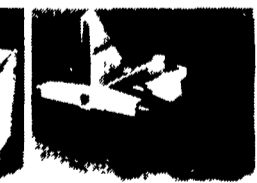


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