

# Ag Advisory Council

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been "terrific," particularly in the area of molecular biology. Through biotechnology, powerful research tools have been developed, but none of us know yet just how powerful they are.

"We don't know how powerful the research tools are that we have before us," Thomas said. "We have gone through a decade where we have been scared of them — worried to death we may create a monster. Worried that we would go in and mess with genetic structures and some kind of thing would crawl out of the laboratory and eat up all our corn and perhaps our feet at the same time.

"We are now beginning to find there are indeed tremendous gains that can come to us through biotechnology, and we are just beginning in a big way. And we are going to use the resources of the university to give the college of agriculture the opportunity to capitalize more on biotechnology. I am hopeful we can make better use of our biotechnology center," Thomas said.

On the subject of funding for the university, Thomas said he has been in a "track meet" between

State College and Harrisburg during the first five weeks of his presidency. "We need to find ways to increase the funding the Pennsylvania State University gets from the commonwealth," Thomas said. "Most people in the commonwealth want to see this happen, but we haven't taken the necessary steps to fill the gap."

Thomas said, "Pennsylvania is 47th out of 50 states in public support for higher education. We have seen erosion in the federal support for agricultural education and state erosion for support of higher education," Thomas said. "I believe in the representative form of government. If we articulate to the people of Pennsylvania what we do for them as a university, people of Pennsylvania will not tolerate being 47th. They will in fact talk to their legislators and the legislators will vote the way they think their people want them to vote.

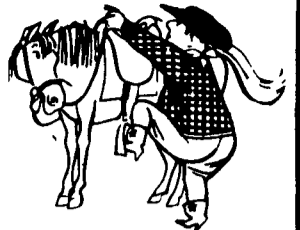
"And we need to tell them how we want them to vote for assistance to the university. It will take grass roots support. It will not happen by my track meets to Harrisburg, but by continuous help from the people."

Thomas said he was impressed

with the beauty and the vitality of the Berks campus. This campus is within 50 miles of 90 percent of Pennsylvania's food industry. The new agriculture department provides the first two years of every agricultural program that is available at Penn State. Students can come to Berks, not only from the immediate environment, but from anywhere, even out of state.

The PSU Ag Advisory Council has a representative from each major organization and segment of agriculture and meets regularly with university officials to provide dialog between the representative organizations and the university.

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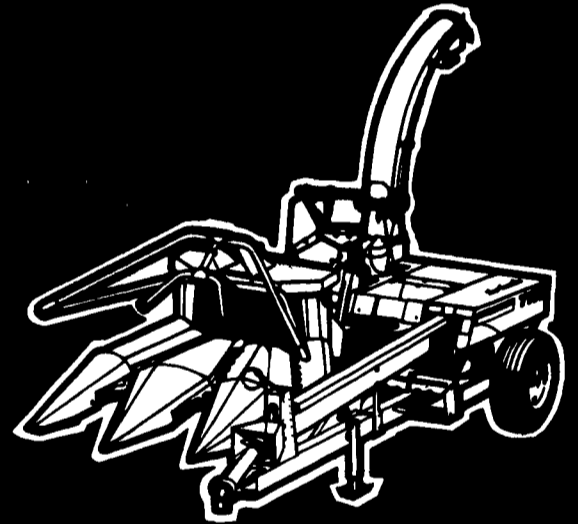
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