

Mild Session Predicted For PFA Annual Meeting

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HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — An official with the Pennsylvania Farmer's Association (PFA) said he expects debate among county delegates to be mild when the association determines its 1991 policy at an upcoming annual meeting in Hershey.

Every year, during its annual meeting of county delegates, the PFA develops policy which serves to inform legislators as to the organization's stance on issues.

This year's 40th annual meeting is scheduled from Nov. 12 to Nov. 14 in the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center.

The state policy is a reflection of all policies adopted at the county level. Those policies are passed to the state level of the association to be reviewed, compared, compiled or eliminated.

Last week, to prepare policy recommendations for delegates to debate and vote upon, the PFA Policy Development Committee met in Harrisburg for three days of meetings.

John Bell, legislative counsel to the PFA, said that, in reviewing the policy recommendations that are to be considered, delegates have a full but not volatile agenda.

"I think the resolutions committee did a good job of consolidating numerous related issues into a single policy resolution and eliminated those resolutions already part of the (PFA) policy. That's why we (PD committee) met. We eliminated those county resolutions which already are law or part of PFA policy," Bell said.

"Those resolutions which are fully dealt with in PFA policy, the job is to consolidate (various recommendations) to present to the delegate body at the annual meeting," he said.

Bell has been representing PFA since 1981. He said that over the years, this year's issues could be compared to the weather — non-hostile.

"Generally speaking, it seems that some of the more difficult issues — the dairy issue, the wetlands issue — were dealt with last year," Bell said. "So this year, other than animal welfare and crop damage, should be a relatively mild year."

However, Bell said that, because of the lapse in time between county meetings and the annual meeting, issues which come to surface in the meantime — such as the Iraqi Crisis — can still be handled.

Wetlands

"There are a number of resolutions to be considered in the area of wetlands," he said. "However, there were a number of other (wetlands) resolutions last year which are already part of current policy."

Crop Damage

"In the area of crop damage, to summarize, our association is proposing that farmers have more convenient means available to them to shoot game causing crop damage than is available to them right now," he said.

Animal Welfare

"Also, in the ability of the animal welfare agencies to enforce the crimes code, there is a proposal to require greater training and education on animal husbandry practices for those who would be authorized — private organization representatives who are authorized — to enforce crimes codes," he said.

Specifically, Bell said the PFA is looking for "greater training in police procedure and that they have training in animal husbandry practices."

Judicial Elections

"Another issue which has gotten some policy is in the area of statewide judicial offices and a proposal being offered which would require that state superior and commonwealth court offices be fulfilled through a regional election system rather than statewide elections," Bell said.

Farm Labor Law

According to Bell, seasonal

labor is an issue of continued concern.

He said the PFA will be considering a policy recommendation "That the Pennsylvania Seasonal Farm Labor Act be amended to provide greater consistency with federal law, and to make the law more understandable, and more consistently applicable in the hiring and use of seasonal laborers."

He said policy proposal also contains a recommendation that "... limits applicability of the act to those who are truly seasonal and to exclude full-time farm workers from any consideration under the act."

ATVs And Snowmobiles

Attempting to better be able to crack down on those who illegally operate All-Terrain-Vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles is the focus of yet another recommendation delegates are to consider.

"In the area of motor vehicles, there is proposed resolution which would require altering ATV and snowmobile registration numbers to be larger than those required now," Bell said. The reason is "... so that (the vehicles) are more easily identified; especially in cases where they are being used illegally on private property."

Widow's Tax

A subject that can generate discussion, but should not cause dissension among delegates is the Widow's Tax, according to Bell.

"Another issue, which right now is being considered in the legislature, is the repeal of the widow's tax," Bell said. The widow's tax is the taxing of property, not in both people's name, that is passed on to a surviving spouse.

"There is a resolution to repeal that tax (because it is) onerous on farm operations and farm families."



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