

Wilkinson Gets Nod For Reappointment

VERNON ACHENBACH, JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Leon Wilkinson, of Landenberg, Chester Co., received the nod from the state Senate Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee Wednesday for reappointment to the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board.

A member of the PMMB since April 1986, and a retired dairyman whose sons operate the 4,000 acre, 1,000-milking herd Wilkinson Farms, was given unanimous support by the members of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee for another term on the board.

The Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board is a controlling board

which is in place as a check of the regulation of the milk industry in Pennsylvania, charged with ensuring safe, fairly priced, fluid milk for consumers and processors, and also to ensure fair prices for dairymen.

Wilkinson is a nominee by Gov. Robert Casey, but is at odds with the Casey administration's control of PMMB funds.

In discussing his first term on the board, Wilkinson said, "I had some priority issues when I came on, and I'm sorry to say I haven't gotten them all accomplished yet. I think with the budget restraints as most all of the department have found that some of these things had to be put aside.

"Through our fees and licensing we raise about \$1,300,000 a year



Leon Wilkinson

and that goes through the general fund (as do state income tax revenues) and some way it sort of got detoured and didn't get back to us to utilize.

"It has been very upsetting to me to think that we have spinning our wheels for the last four or five months worrying about budget, when there are so many jobs out there that need to be satisfied."

Wilkinson was talking about the fact that even though the PMMB had received a general fund allocation of \$950,000 this year from tax funds, the Casey administration's policy of releasing funds has been on a limited basis.

According to Wilkinson, the agency is short a number of auditors and expects to lose several more through early retirement.

Even though additional auditors are needed in order for the agency to carry out its mission in an effective manner, the Casey administration has neither freed funds to the agency or allowed the agency to hire replacements for existing positions, much less additional ones.

The Casey administration, faced with a huge budget deficit over the past couple of years has not given the agency the money it raised for its own operation, but has kept the funds to offset spending in other areas.

Even more, when the dairy industry supported increasing licensing and fees to increase operational revenue for the PMMB, the Casey administration kept the money.

After giving testimony, the agriculture committee, most of whom know Wilkinson, readily approved his reappointment and also asked of his support for H.B. 872, legislation which would remove the governor's authority over any allocated tax funds set by the Legislature to the PMMB.

Wilkinson said he supports the measure, though he said he didn't know if it would matter as far as being able to hire replacement auditors for the PMMB, since Secretary of Budget Michael Herschok, has been refusing to authorize hiring of personnel to the PMMB.

The committee later approved reporting H.B. 872 out of committee for consideration.

Promotional Activities Highlight Beef Month

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Numerous promotion and education programs, designed to increase consumer awareness of Pennsylvania's beef industry, highlight this year's "October is Beef Month" celebration. Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Beef Council, the month-long activities are taking place when traditionally a large number of cattle are marketed.

An initial mailing to daily and weekly newspapers within the state helped to heighten consumer interest and knowledge of Pennsylvania's beef industry. Hoss's Steak & Sea Houses, this year's beef backer winner, cooperated

with the Beef Council on the October Beef Month promotion through the use of special napkins, placemats and crew buttons. Laneco Supermarkets, a retail chain consisting of 24 stores, displayed special Beef Month point-of-purchase materials.

County beef organizations have actively placed foodservice and retail materials at local restaurants and grocery stores. The Beef Council also sponsored two retail meat merchandising seminars and cosponsored, with Dairy Council, Inc., a dietitian conference.

"The scope of activities being

conducted, from retail and health-care seminars to an extensive media mailing, will help the industry market its products during a period of heavy meat supplies," says David Ivan, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Beef Council. "The industry benefits from the merchandising and educational seminars, however, will far outlast our October timeframe."

In addition to the activities outlined above, the Beef Council is also preparing a mailing for high school libraries which will serve as a reference booklet on the


state's beef industry.

The month of activities will culminate with Beef Day at Penn State, on October 26 for the Penn State versus West Virginia football game. A special beef pressbox luncheon is planned, and the Beef Council will sponsor a tailgate appreciation dinner for various faculty representatives at Penn State.

The October Beef Month promotion is just part of a coordinated marketing program funded by the \$1 per head beef checkoff program.

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