

PCMA Meeting Highlights Agriculture's Condition

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Wayne Kuhns, president of the Pennsylvania Crop Management Association, used information from his own farming experience to illustrate the value of CMA to his operation, at the eighth annual meeting of PCMA.

Kuhns related details of his own cropping experiences at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Crop Management Association at the Knights of Columbus Hall in State College.

In 1991, Kuhns saved \$3,500 in crop inputs through following the recommendations of his county CMA consultant. Through soil testing and weed, disease and insect scouting, he used only the inputs necessary to meet his production goals.

Dry weather interfered with the potential crops of corn and alfalfa he had anticipated.

"Like most farmers, I don't have \$3,500 in the bank from the savings, but had that money to use in other ways on the farm," said Kuhns.

Reduced labor was not factored into his savings figures. An additional benefit is the improvement of water quality on the farm, he said.

To inform Pennsylvania farmers about the economic advantages of crop management associations and to convey to the public the responsible practices of farmers using crop management associations are the goals of the PCMA, said Kuhns. "We need to be working to achieve these goals," he said.

State Secretary of Agriculture

Boyd Wolff talked about the results of a recent study on agricultural chemical use conducted by Penn State and funded by the Department of Agriculture.

The study showed that most farmers are using Integrated Pest Management even if they don't know it, he said. There has been a reduction in the amount of chemical used on Pennsylvania farms.

The study also showed that the small operation and part-time farmers need additional information and education on chemical uses, and that more effort needs to be made to tell the non-farm people of the use of IPM among Pennsylvania farmers.

Wolff addressed the state's fiscal problems and said he didn't hold much hope for improvement in the short term.

The Department of Agriculture is keeping track of nutrient management legislation that has passed the House and is now in the Senate, Weiff said. Someone from the department is to be testifying at hearing which will be conducted soon on the bill.

On another topic, Wolff warned farmers that there has been a request for a 52 percent workers' compensation which will affect all employers including farmers.

Sen. Roger Madigan of the 23rd District expressed regret at Gov. Robert P. Casey didn't even mention agriculture or rural Pennsylvania in his recent state of the state address. With agriculture being the number one industry in the state and the state having the largest rural population in the nation the governor could have

made comment in his speech, he said.

Madigan discussed Ag 2000, a packages of bills to help Pennsylvania agriculture meet the challenges of the future. Many of the bills will be held back because of fiscal restraints at this time, but Madigan said he expects the regulations of labeling of organic food to come to the floor and hopes to get a crop insurance bill moving soon.

"These are changing times which put pressure on agriculture," said Madigan. Efforts are being made to make Pennsylvania agriculture sustainable, the opportunity to make a comfortable living and preservation of farm land for the future.

Farmers must realize the interdependence of all crops and the world impact on their farms, Madigan said.

"Pennsylvania agriculture is in the hands of the people who make it through the tough times and the good times," Madigan said. "The future is in good hands."

Veteran crop consultant, Martin Krone, Franklin County CMA and rookie crop consultant Tom Morgart, Lehigh Valley CMA, presented their perspectives on the work they do and the importance of CMA to agriculture.

The One Plan pilot project was reviewed by Barry Frantz who is

on loan from Soil Conservation Service to the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts. The project is being conducted in Lehigh, Northumberland and York counties. Efforts to coordinate information between the various agencies a farmer deals with and to develop plans that will have lasting serviceability for the farm and farmer are goals of the project. Efforts to simplify the process and make the plans flexible is very important, said Frantz. The Soil Conservation Districts, Soil Conservation Service, CMA and the Extension service are working together on the project. Cooperation has also come from DER, ASCS and the agriculture department.

Plans for pilot farmers will be developed by March of this year and they will be reviewed in a year to evaluate the workability of the plans.

To develop the one-plan system

across the state will require more CMA consultants and the cooperation of a lot of people in many agencies.

The afternoon included a panel discussion of crop insurance, with Bill McSweeney, extension economist, Liz Boob, Centre Insurance and John P. Held, of Held Insurance Agency, fielding questions.

Retiring directors, Jim Eshelman, Steve Kistler, Wayne Kuhns, Harold Book, Sheldon Harshbarger, Charles Allen, Duane Wilcox and Ed Snook were honored for their service to the organization.

Others that addressed the group included Louis Moore, extension economist, Stanley Curtis, head of the dairy and animal science department at Penn State, Allen Turgeon, head of Penn State's agronomy department and Gary Petersen, co-director of the remote sensing project in the agronomy department of the university.

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