

# Pennsylvania Holstein Convention News

## Berkley To Head

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Castle, representing the northwest district. They replace Laszlo Moses and John Grice III, Washington, whose executive board terms expired.

Other members of the executive board include past president Wayne Harpster, Kenneth Mowry, Roaring Springs, Lloyd Pease, Susquehanna, Curtis Day, Shippenburg, and Donald Hostetter, Parkesburg.

Treasurer Dean Johnson reported an excess of income over expenses of \$18,987 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1991, with a year-end member equity level of \$456,017.

In his report to the membership, PHA executive director William Nichol shared a five-point "wish list" for the association. Nichol wishes that all 50 county clubs will become involved in the state's holiday cheese sale. Last year's participating 22 clubs raised a combined \$24,000 for their treasuries.

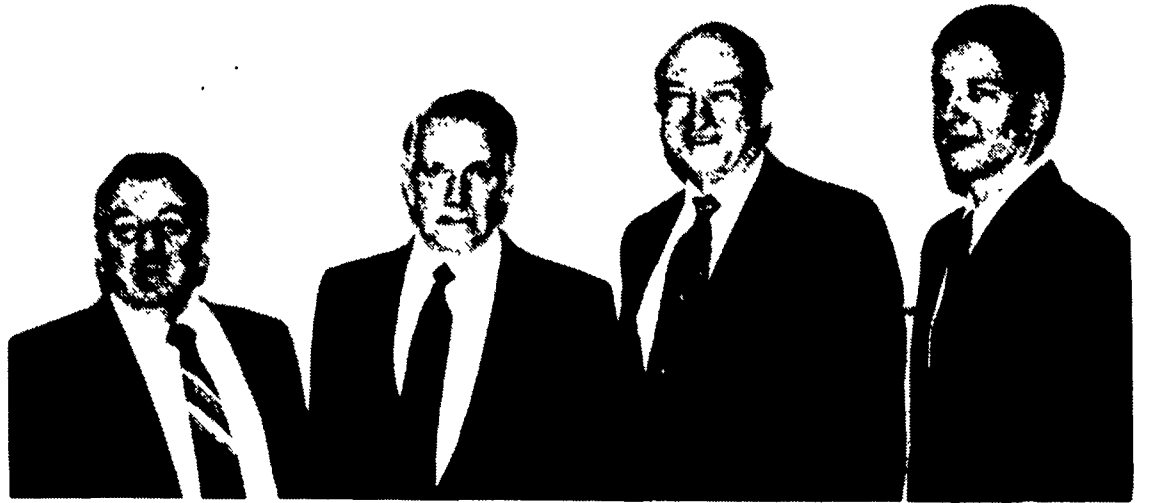
Two of Nichol's wishes focused on the PHA's youth activities. One is that every county club will sponsor a junior organization, and the other wish is that more financial support can be raised for

youth to participate in the state's annual junior convention.

With world trade a continuing issue for American agriculture, Nichol also wishes for a trade program which would provide transportation support for sending 30-40,000 Holstein bred heifers annually to needy countries around the world. In the 21 years in which PHA has been involved in the cattle export market, Holstein genetics have gone to some 50 countries worldwide.

Nichol's foremost wish focused on the regionalization of grass roots Holstein groups in areas of the country with more limited membership. While Pennsylvania has nearly 5,000 adult and 2,000 junior members, many areas have more limited resources of people and programs.

National Holstein Association director John Cope, Grantham, reported a dramatic upswing in numbers or registry applications submitted to the Brattleboro, Vermont, headquarters. Applications received during the first seven weeks of 1992 tallied some 10,000 more than in the comparable period of 1991. Transfer applications were 5,000 greater in that same period. That increase in applica-



Newly elected officers of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association are Lewis Barkley, president, second from left, and Laszlo Moses, vice president, left. Dean Johnson, right was reelected treasurer, and Bill Nichol is executive director.

tions has resulted in a 19-day backlog of work.

Cope, the NHA board's finance chairman, also reported that, because of the association's decision to not raise fees during last year's dairy industry cash-flow crunch, over \$1 million was used from the reserve fund. However, operations management still allowed for the adding of \$700,000 to NHA's reserve fund principal of \$14 million.

National director Tom Kelly, Tyrone, urged every member to attend one of the upcoming Holstein Winter Forum programs. Numerous policies and programs

of HFA are up for review and consideration, including the long-range strategic plan, classification, national shows, merchandising policies and genetic issues.

Members voted to support David Burket, East Freedom, in his bid for the national board seat being vacated by Pennsylvania director John Cope. After eight years on the board, Cope will retire as a director during the National Holstein convention, to be held in late June in Salt Lake City, Utah.

By unanimous vote, the membership also passed a pair of re-

solutions dealing with environmental issues. On resolution supports legislation that would establish an agriculture advisory board for the state's Department of Environmental Resources. Such a board would assist and advise on policy development dealing with normal farming practices.

A second resolution supports coordination among all state agencies dealing with soil conservation plans and pesticide and wetlands issues.

Planners for the February 1993 annual convention announced the host site to be Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County.

## Kerr Seeking Input On Holstein Challenges

JOYCE BUYP

York Co. Correspondent

WARRENDALE (Allegheny Co.) — At least one person sent a letter to President Bush after his recent trade visit to Japan, suggesting that he take dairy producers on such missions if he wants to promote American products.

No answer to that suggestion has yet been received, according to letter writer Steve Kerr, chief executive officer of the National Holstein Association. Kerr related that correspondence during his featured talk with members and guests at the Pennsylvania Holstein Convention.

Kerr, the Holstein CEO since last August, is visiting members and associations around the country gathering input to help chart future policy and programs of the breed organization.

As part of the grass-roots-input program, Kerr announced the planned installments of an 800-toll-free telephone line at the Brattleboro, Vermont, headquarters for use by members needing assistance. A second additional 800-line will speed help for solving logistical problems encountered by classifiers and consultants working in the field.

Because only four of the past 10 fiscal years have been financially profitable for the national association, three of the four area offices are scheduled for closing, including the Harrisburg location. That move is projected to save some \$200,000 annually.

"HFA continues to wrestle with problems similar to those farmers face," noted Kerr. Among them are continuing fewer, but larger farms, changing technology, uncertainties of world trade and milk pricing.

Kerr urged members to participate in upcoming Winter Forum meetings, where policy issues are debated at the grass roots level. One issue in line for intense scrutiny



Steve Kerr, chief executive officer of the National Holstein Association, is asking members nationwide to participate in upcoming winter forums for input on needs of future policies and programs of the breed organization.

is seeking ways of marketing the majority of registered Holsteins without index "numbers." An ad hoc committee is being appointed to study that marketing challenge.

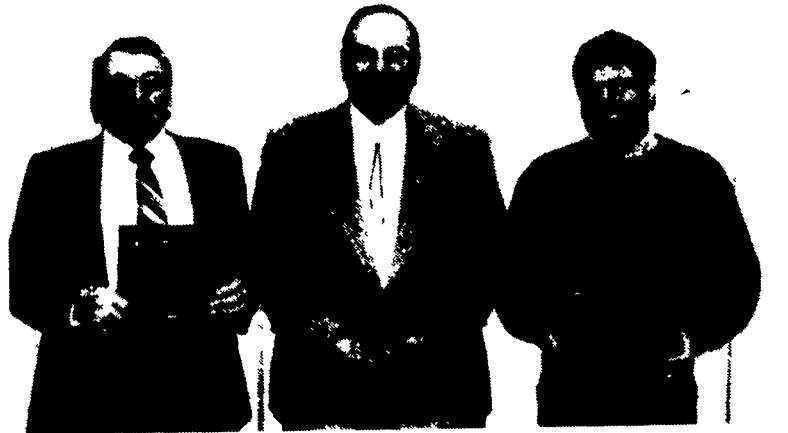
A worldwide demand for milk will grow, Kerr believes, and the United States may be the most significant exporter of dairy products in the next decade. He predicts that heavy levels of European dairy subsidies "cannot continue forever," and that the efficiency of the American dairy producer will make the industry very competitive on world markets.

Pennsylvania is expected to continue as a leading dairy state, possibly moving into the third high state nationwide, according

to Cornell economists cited by Kerr. Environmental problems encountered in expanding dairy production areas, like California, and continuing heavy urban population in the Northeast requiring dairy product favors the Commonwealth's continuance as a milk-producing center.

With a background in dairy cooperative and legislative work, Kerr expressed extreme frustration with the inability of the dairy industry to overcome the price-breaking resulting from even just a small surplus of milk production. The government's commitment to a cheap food supply enhances milk pricing problems.

"Co-ops can manage the nation's milk supply," Kerr said, if all farmers participated in cooperative marketing. "That's



Retiring PHA executive board members Laszlo Moses, left and John Grice, right, accepted plaques of appreciation from Wayne Harpster, association president.

what's standing in the way of better prices."

Kerr warned Pennsylvania Holstein breeders that dairy is "on the list" for animal rightists' activities, and the HFA is working toward a practices plan and policy

on animal care.

"We are so well fed that we have the luxury of thinking that food grows in grocery stores," Kerr lamented in his closing remarks.

## Backus Highlights Holstein History

JOYCE BUYP

York Co. Correspondent

WARRENDALE (Allegheny Co.) — Drawing from a wealth of experience, an abundant reserve of memories and his good-natured sense of humor, featured speaker Horace Backus delighted attendees of the Pennsylvania Holstein Convention.

Backus, who with his brother Charles arranged and conducted hundreds of cattle sales over the past 40 years, traced highlights of his Pennsylvania memories for convention goers. The Backus brothers continue the Backus Pedigree Company begun in 1912 by their father in Mexico, New York.

On the evening before his talk, Horace returned to the familiar spot in the auction box at the 1992 convention sale, which opened the PHA annual confab, held February 26-29 at the Sheraton Inn.

The first sale the Backus firm held in Pennsylvania was in 1953, with an average of \$649, second-



Horace Backus, noted Holstein pedigree specialist, auctioneer and historian, delighted his PHA audience with anecdotes and memories of nearly 40 years associated with the Pennsylvania cattle sales business.

high in the state for that year. Backus recalled their initial concerns over whether "anyone would come" to this, their first, sale in the state.

A backbone event of the Backus sales activities in Pennsylvania were the Garden Spot sales. In the early years, Backus noted that "Pennsylvania was a buying state," and cattle frequently had to be brought in from Canada to assemble enough animals to hold a sale. Cattle were sometimes simply tied to fence and tents set up in available parking lots.

"After the sales, there was nothing left but dust," chuckled Backus in remembrance. He noted that in the ensuing years, many of the "alumni" of those sales have gone on to be outstanding dairy farmers and cattle breeders.

Learning when to set sales, according to Backus, was sometimes a painful - and costly - experience.

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