

Ag Council Of America Membership Increases

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The 3,500-member Agriculture Council of America today reported a 25-percent increase in "major members" — those representing national and regional organizations — and a similar increase in revenues over a one-year period. These increases have allowed significant redirection and expansion of the Ag Council's FoodWatch and National Agriculture Day programs.

The Agriculture Council of America promotes and builds public understanding and support for the food and agriculture industry. The Ag Council serves as an umbrella organization that brings together food and fiber related industries to conduct public education programs and to define effective solutions to public issues that affect agriculture as a whole.

"We have strengthened our membership in virtually every sector of America agriculture, from input manufacturers and co-ops, to local dealers and individual farmers, with special success in recruiting national and state producer organizations," said Ag Council President and Chief Executive Officer Wm. Patrick Nichols.

"We're particularly pleased that we were able to add new members and increase our funding despite the weakness in the economy,"

Nichols added. "It's a signal that the industry is enthusiastic about our programming efforts. As the old saying goes, 'nothing succeeds like success.'"

The Ag Council's programs, including FoodWatch and National Ag Day, have been reoriented to position the American farmer and rancher as the "human face" of the industry. FoodWatch is a nationwide public information program that relies primarily on farmers and ranchers, and secondarily on other members of the agricultural community and other experts, to address food safety issues with the public. With the central theme, "Growing Better Every Day," FoodWatch programs demonstrate how the public benefits directly from the American agricultural system through wholesome products at relatively low cost with convenience, quality and variety.

National Agricultural Day is supported by the President, Congress, and the governors of nearly every U.S. state and territory. The Ag Council serves as the coordinator for this annual tribute to America's food and fiber industry. The Ag Council provides promotional materials to companies and organizations, serves as a clearinghouse for information and ideas, shepherds legislation officially proclaiming the observance

and coordinates a Capitol Hill reception for members of Congress and industry leaders. In 1993, National Ag Day will celebrate its 20th Anniversary with special programs, exhibits and presentations across the nation.

Ag Council program highlights in 1992 included:

- *The launch of a national outreach program with trained spokespeople* — The Ag Council has selected agriculture producers throughout the country to lead the consumer education effort. These spokespeople are committed to educating the general public about the advances that are being made in the production and safety of our food supply through meetings with consumers and media alike.

- *Strengthening of the National Ag Day grassroots network* — To complement the traditional role of the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture as the Honorary Chairman and of the bipartisan leadership of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees serving as co-chairmen, the Ag Council has recently asked the state Secretaries of Agriculture to serve as Honorary Chairs of events in their respective states. To date, 35 have accepted and none have refused. These Secretaries have agreed to help coordinate communications about the hundreds of Ag Day events around the country. In so

doing, they will work with many leading organizations in grassroots agriculture, including American Agri-Women, the American National CattleWomen, the Extension Services, the Farm Bureaus, National AgriMarketing Association and Women Involved in Farm Economics.

- *The start of the FoodWatch Information Center* — A toll-free number was established to serve as a primary information resource for the media. Media that use the center are referred to government and industry experts who can address specific questions on topics such as additives, pesticides, advances in biotechnology and

general food safety and production issues.

"The Ag Council's strength is its broad-based membership that includes every segment of the food and fiber industry," said Nichols. "What we try to do at the Ag Council is put a human face on agriculture and agricultural issues. Our programs are designed for producers to reach out to people and to help agriculture and the public understand one another. With the success we enjoyed this year expanding our membership, we are optimistic that our message is getting through, and that we will continue to expand our programming efforts in 1993."

PTA Herdlife In Bull PTIs

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — The board of directors of the American Guernsey Association has adopted a proposal to include the PTA herdlife in the calculation of the Guernsey bull PTIs in July 1993.

PTA herdlife is equal to the sum of PTAs of linear traits times their genetic regression coefficient.

The AGA plans to keep the same production to type ratio (6:1) as it is now because the breed needs to continue emphasizing production. However, the PTI to be used in July 1993 will be changed to the following ratios:

$$PTI=5 (PTA \text{ protein}/SD \text{ PTA} + 1 (PTA \text{ fat}/SD \text{ PTA} \text{ fat}) + 1 (PTA \text{ FHL}/SD \text{ FHL})$$

where SD=standard deviation
where FHL=functional herdlife

Functional herdlife attempts to remove the voluntary culling which is highly correlated with production of the animal. This will allow Guernsey breeders to look at the cow without the production influence on the type traits. The resulting genetic information should help Guernsey owners breed more durable and profitable cows.

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