

# State Rep: Prescription Feeding May Help Keystone Ag, Chesapeake

**HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)** — Pennsylvania officials will participate in a research exchange project with officials from the Netherlands that ultimately will benefit Pennsylvania's No. 1 industry, agriculture.

Nutrient management prescription feeding and the potential for a 25 percent reduction of nitrogen in Pennsylvania's waterways and the Chesapeake Bay will be the focus of the exchange in November. The project is intended to establish a long-term relationship for coordinated research efforts with the Dutch, who lead the world in research related to animal feed formulation and nutrient management.

More specifically, members of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, its Pennsylvania delegation and members from other states, and Pennsylvania agriculture and academic officials, will travel to the Netherlands to meet with high level agriculture officials there. The group will visit farms, manure processing plants and other agricultural research institutions in order to get an understanding of how farmers there utilize nutrient management systems.

The ultimate objective of the visit is to secure the terms of an agreement for long-term research coordination with the Dutch.

The second phase of the project will involve officials from the Netherlands traveling to the United States to meet with key government, agriculture and research leaders to establish specific research protocols for long-term coordination.

According to Dr. James Ferguson, veterinarian and researcher with the Center for Animal Pro-

ductivity at the University of Pennsylvania, agriculture officials in the Netherlands are conducting research complementary to the research being conducted here in the southcentral Pennsylvania region.

The center is one of the leading research institutions in the country dealing with the issue of prescription feeding.

Ferguson, who is leading the studies here, said he is working on prescription feeding research that could net a decrease of about 25 percent in nitrogen production and pollution yet maintain maximum feeding efficiency.

"This research will have environmental and economic benefits to farms and agriculture-related businesses," Ferguson said.

Dr. Charles Krueger, associate dean for research at Penn State University's College of Agriculture Science, also will be attending the exchange.

"This is the next step in our efforts to deal with the issue of manure management and cleanup of the bay," Krueger said.

He added that Pennsylvania is a regional leader in nutrient management.

In June, Pennsylvania Gov. Robert P. Casey signed nutrient management legislation that would require certain farms to develop and implement nutrient management plans which will help limit the amount of nutrients, particularly nitrogen, which could otherwise run off into nearby streams. Nitrogen has been identified as a pollution source in the Chesapeake Bay. Southcentral Pennsylvania's waterways empty into the bay.

"Farm operations with high animal densities seem to be at the

heart of the issue," Krueger said. "They produce large amounts of animal waste which break down and create large amounts of nitrogen. Eventually it is carried through our water systems and to the bay. Because of the population size and farm animal density in the Netherlands, they have similar problems."

Those participating include Pennsylvania state Rep. Jeffrey Coy, D-Franklin, chairman of the Chesapeake Bay Commission;

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Boyd Wolf; Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources Secretary Art Davis; Pennsylvania state Sen. Mike Bortner, D-York; Pennsylvania state Sen. Noah Wenger, R-Lancaster; Pennsylvania state

Rep. Stephen Stetler, D-York; and Maryland delegate James McClellan. Other officials attending include Krueger; Ferguson; Dave Brubaker, PennAg Industries Association; and George Robinson, Kramer Feed.

*Make it Milk*

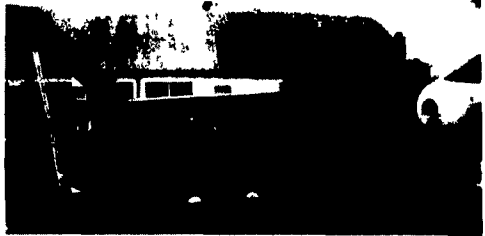
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