

400 Pa. Farm Bureau Members To Visit Legislators In Harrisburg

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — Nearly 400 Pennsylvania farmers will call on their state lawmakers Monday, March 14 to discuss legislation in the General Assembly which is important to agriculture. The visits will be part of the annual Harrisburg Legislative Tour conducted by the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (Farm Bureau) is a voluntary statewide farm organization which represents 23,542 families in 54 county units. The farmers visiting Harrisburg are members of county farm bureau legislative committees.

"There are some issues facing the farm community which require legislative action," said Farm Bureau president Keith Eckel. "It makes sense to meet face-to-face with our legislators so they can learn first-hand how these issues are affecting us and what we feel should be done about them. We will be recommending action based on the grassroots policies

which have been developed and adopted by our organization."

Among the issues farmers will discuss are the following:

- **Local Tax Reform** — Farm Bureau is supporting H.B. 891 and H.B. 2202 which provide the opportunity for local tax reform. Farm Bureau policy calls for the elimination of nuisance taxes and the reduction of property taxes through a locally-determined mix of income and property taxes by school districts and the removal of income tax restrictions on local governments. Property tax exemptions should be narrowed and limits placed on individual tax burdens.

- **Deep Mine Subsidence** — Present law does not protect landowners in case of water loss or pollution due to underground mining in their area. Mine operators are also restricted by law from mining under houses built before 1966. Farm Bureau supports S.B. 955 which would give mining

operators greater flexibility in siting mines and would require them to replace or restore any impaired water supplies within 48 hours.

- **Animal Health** — Laws governing domestic animal health and disease control date back in some cases to the 19th century and need to be updated. H.B. 2215 has been introduced to recodify the old laws and give the PA Department of Agriculture the authority needed to effectively monitor animal health and respond quickly to disease outbreaks. Farm Bureau supports the goals of the legislation and is recommending some amendments for clarification.

- **Farm Odors** — Pennsylvania's air pollution law exempts the production of agricultural commodities. However, DER has reacted to complaints about odors from mushroom composting by deciding that it does not constitute agricultural production and is therefore in violation of the law. Farm Bureau is supporting H.B. 1814 to clearly identify farm activities that are exempt — including mushroom composting.

Passage of bills to protect agriculture during water shortages and to eliminate roadside litter by placing deposits on bottles and cans will also be sought. Other topics will include amendments to improve the operation of the state's farmland preservation program and clarify state vehicle code requirements for farm trucks.

Farmers participating in the Harrisburg tour will also be urging support of legislation, H.B. 1353 to balance state wetlands protection with property rights, and S.B. 1255 to clarify and restore the scope of the state's 1978 Seasonal Farm Labor to its original intent.

Bulls Complete Testing

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Meat Animal Evaluation Center has announced the final results from its performance-tested bull program. The Sale Committee has selected the best 60 bulls to offer for sale in Pennsylvania's 21st Performance-tested Bull Sale, scheduled for Friday, March 25, at Penn State's Ag Arena. This committee, consisting of producers with bulls on test and several members of the bull-testing technical committee, was rather selective, requiring the bulls to pass stringent breeding soundness and structural evaluations.

This year's sales event will feature a trade show with over twenty commercial exhibitors who will also provide numerous valuable door prizes. In addition to fitting the bulls for the sale, the Penn State Block and Bridle Club will be preparing plenty of good food for a large crowd.

The Bull Sale is scheduled to get underway at 12 noon with the sale of the top-indexing Polled Hereford. This SBF Royal Gypsy King son consigned by Fred McMurray indexed 117 and was the fastest gaining of his breed. He also had the top yearling weight for the breed and posted a +50 lbs yearling weight EPD. Walter Boosel's PS Jazz 008 son was the second highest indexing Polled Hereford. This bull had an actual birth weight of 70 lb. and an adjusted yearling weight of 1,232 lb. Twenty-one Polled Hereford bulls will be included in this sale.

Next up will be 24 Angus bulls. The top-indexing Angus bull is the lightest birth weight EPD bull consigned by Joe and Bobbi McMullen. This calving-ease bull with an actual birth weight of 69 lb. gained 4.62 lb. per day on test and recorded an adjusted yearling weight of 1,354 lb. This bull's 118 index is tops of the 74 bulls completing the testing program. The second-highest indexing Angus was the R&J Maxima bull from Error Hill Farms. This ET bull recorded a final index of 115 and the top adjusted yearling weight (1,371 lb.) of the Angus up for sale. The top-gaining Angus also ended up third highest indexing Angus, with an ADG of 4.63 lb. per day on test and a final index of 112.

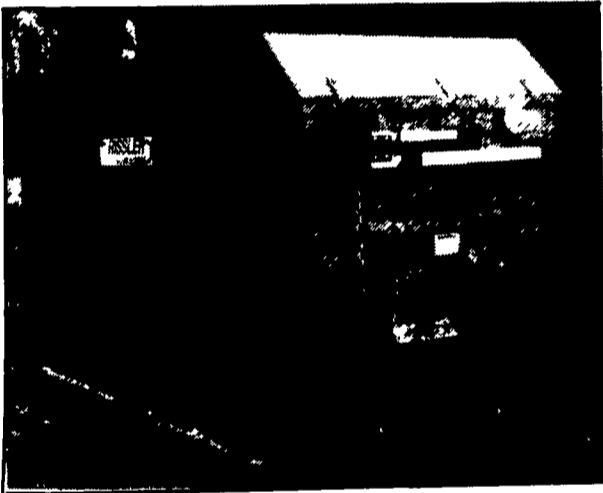
The top two indexing Simmentals were both consigned by Ken Foust. These two top-performing bulls have indexes of 115 and 110, respectively. They also recorded the two top adjusted yearling weights over all the bulls on test. Their yearling weights were 1,535 and 1,526 lb. The sire of both of these bulls, MF Advantage, was the top-indexing and top-selling Simmental bull in the 1990 Pennsylvania Performance-tested Bull Sale. The third highest indexing Simmental, belonging to Bill and Karen Flagg, was a calving-ease Simmental which recorded the top gain on test for the breed of 4.42 lb. per day.

The lone Charolais tested had a very good gain of 3.70 lb. per day and an adjusted 365-day weight of 1,335 lb. This smooth-musled polled Charolais was consigned by Bratton Charolais Farm.

For more information on the bulls or on the center's performance-testing programs, or to request a sale catalog, contact Glenn Eberly, Director; Meat Animal Evaluation Center, 651 Fox Hollow Road, State College, PA 16803 (telephone 814-238-2527 or 814-865-5857).

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