

N.Y. Farmers Report On AFBF Activity

ALBANY, N.Y. — When it comes to commodity issues, the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) board of directors receives advice from a number of farmer committees.

Several New York farmers serve on these special national committees. They recently met in St. Louis.

• Greenhouse/nursery — Bill Chase, Monroe County, serves on this committee. This committee spent the bulk of its time delving into the impact of environmental issues and labor concerns impacting greenhouse/nursery owners. According to Chase, the soon-to-be-implemented Workers' Protection Standard (WPS) will have "an enormous impact on everybody." Ultimately, WPS will go against agriculture's effort to cut pesticides because of re-entry schedules, etc. The committee also talked about workers' compensation — including the rebates that farmers in several other states are getting.

• On the environmental side, the Endangered Species Act took center stage. Chase summed up this killer law this way: "If it comes between you and a snail, the snail wins." The farmers also expressed their dismay with the call to list every piece of land — mapped out for species on property. Lastly, the group touched on water problems around the nation, including the lowering of the water table in Florida, nonpoint source pollution, and the metering of water in California. The committee believes these two points and other water quality issues would eventually hit every American farmer.

• Dairy — New York is represented on this committee by Jon Greenwood, a member of the NYFB state board and its executive committee, and a dairy farmer from St. Lawrence County. This committee dealt with the BST

issue. Since it was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the group saw BST as FB policy — a management tool. Regarding BST, the committee reviewed the situation by state. The farmers also examined the proposed consolidation of beef cow groups (Beef Council, National Cattlemen's Association, Meat Export Board, etc.). The committee also discussed the impact on dairy by the North American Free Trade Agreement and the GATT. At this point, the impact of NAFTA on dairy in the U.S. is favorable, while the impact resulting from the GATT is unclear. In addition, the Dairy Committee heard a report on the National Certification Task Force on Johnnes Disease, and the impact of the Clean Water Act as it relates to manure and nutrient management.

• Eggs — The New York representative on this committee is Kurt Kreher, poultry farmer from Erie County. According to Kurt, the most pressing issues discussed at the AFBF Egg Committee meeting included nutrient management, the Clean Water Act, salmonella enteriditis, and the American Egg Board referendum.

Regarding the referendum, producers will have a chance to vote on raising the mandatory checkoff for egg promotion, nutrition research, and consumer education. On the issue of nutrient management, John Bell, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Counsel, told the committee that it's necessary for farmers to be involved in working with the process which will develop the regulations — thus working to mitigate the impact on agriculture. On the crucial topic of salmonella, Kreher discussed FB's efforts to find an acceptable proactive approach to this critical problem.

• Vegetable/potato committee — New York is represented on

this committee by Pete Call, a cash crop farmer from Genesee County. As with other committees, this group discussed the Worker Protection Standards (WPS), Endangered Species Act, and the Clean Water Act. Regarding WPS, Pete noted that a lot of states are not prepared to handle grower training and enforcement. Their advice was solidly behind pushing for a delay of enforcement of the law. When discussing the Endangered Species Act, this committee said that farmers should be listed as an "endangered species." The committee also examined NAFTA, labor regulations, and the protection of private property rights.

• Honeybees — James Doan, a Monroe County beekeeper with about 2,000 hives, is the New York representative on this

national advisory committee. Of prime concern to this committee were the loss of the honey program, the impact of the Varroa Mite, and the overall shortage of bees (a situation being especially felt in southern states, though we could see some impact here). As with other committees, this group also reviewed pressing environmental issues, such as the Endangered Species Act.

• Wheat committee — New York is represented on this national committee by Jim Vincent, a wheat grower from Genesee County. The Wheat Committee tackled a number of concerns, including the 1995 Farm Bill, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), USDA reorganization, federal crop insurance vs. revenue assurance disaster payments, grain

quality, Canadian wheat imports, and environmental concerns.

Vincent reported that expiration of CRP contracts will hit the dominant wheat growing areas of the state hard — up to 20 percent of gross farm income comes from CRP. We need to look beyond soil erosion (such as water quality issues), all the time saying the real beneficiary is the general public. Challenges faced by dominant wheat growing areas are the same challenges for New York growers, such as trade, conservation compliance, and revitalizing rural economies. On the topic of grain quality, the committee heard from Dave Shipman, Federal Grains Inspection Service. He discussed grain quality issues affecting wheat, as well as using near infrared technology to protein-test wheat.

4-H Forestry Teams Prepare For National Invitation

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Youth involved in the 4-H forestry project and conservation related projects will test their knowledge of forestry July 31 to August 4 at the National 4-H Forestry Invitational, sponsored by the International Paper Company Foundation through the National 4-H Council.

This annual event is held at Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp in West Virginia. One four-person team from each state is invited to compete.

Since 1979, more than 800 4-H members from 23 states have competed in events that include tree identification; compass orienteering; forest insect and disease identification; tree measurement; forest evaluation; and the Forestry Bowl, modeled after television's College Bowl.

The National 4-H Forestry Invi-

tational offers participants the opportunity to become more aware of the natural resource needs of our nation. The contest stresses the importance of conserving forest land and develops an appreciation for the significant role forests play in providing products, benefits and services for quality living. Also, it focuses on challenges facing resource professionals who strive to sustain our nation's forests through wise management.

The Maryland 4-H Wildlife and Forestry Invitational Judging Event was held on May 1 at the Nature Community on Meyer Station Road near Crofton in Anne Arundel County.

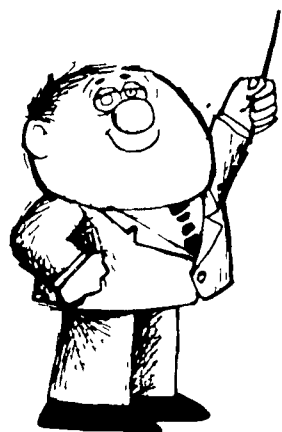
The top four contestants in the state forestry judging event go on to represent Maryland in the national contest in West Virginia. Winners in the state wildlife judging event will represent Maryland this summer at the National 4-H Wildlife Evaluation Invitational Contest, August 6 - 10, at Brian Head, near Cedar City, Utah.

For more information on how 4-H members can become involved in forestry and wildlife educational programs, contact your county cooperative extension service office. Look for the telephone number under county government listings in the blue pages of your telephone directory.

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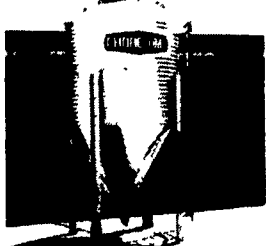
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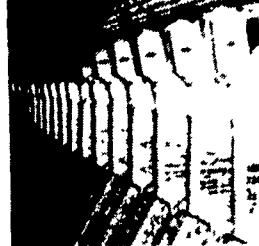
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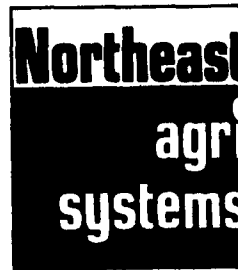
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