

Turnpike Farm Market Bill Re-Introduced

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Bunt, R-Montgomery County, who is chairman of the committee, has "assured" her that he will schedule the bill for a vote on March 7.

"An alliance between the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and the Department of Agriculture would provide for the operation of farmers' markets at turnpike service areas, tollbooth areas and other areas along the turnpike that are deemed safe," she said in a recent news release.

"Pennsylvania has a rich agricultural history. Along with this history comes an abundance of fresh produce sold at farmers' markets around the commonwealth.

"When I first introduced this legislation last session, it served as a catalyst to begin the dialogue between the Agriculture Department and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. As a result, pilot-project markets are being developed, one at the Allentown Service Plaza in Lehigh County, and the other one at the Sideling Hill Service Plaza in Fulton County.

"I'm hopeful my legislation will be enacted this session to assure the continuity of support for this program, regardless of any changes in administrations in Harrisburg."

Miller cited a potentially large direct market for Pennsylvania's producers. At the Allentown Ser-

vice Plaza, more than 10 million cars stop at annually.

"A whole new consumer market could be created by providing these travelers with easy and safe access to Pennsylvania farmers' produce," she said.

Her legislative concept is to create a permit and licensing system that would be implemented at the discretion of the state Department of Agriculture. Permits to operate a turnpike farmers' market would be awarded on either a daily or seasonal basis.

"Providing a location to showcase and promote the variety and quality of commonwealth food and agricultural products to turnpike travelers is an effective way to increase much-needed revenue for Pennsylvania farmers," she said.

In the meantime, the pilot program started last year is developing, and pretty much along the lines intended in the legislation proposed by Rep. Miller.

Sharon Fulginiti, with the Commodity Promotion Division of PDA's Bureau of Marketing Development, is in charge of coordinating the pilot program and said that the Turnpike Commission is currently examining designs of a "pavillion" type structure that would be used to house the roadside markets.

The Sideling Hill site already has a proposed opening date of May 29, which is Memorial Day. Producers already involved in

the Sideling Hill Farmers' Market have come up with a proposed set of bylaws to govern the operations, tentatively restricted to Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday-holidays.

Presumably, those days of operation have been proposed because they coincide with peaks in tourism travel.

While applications for new vendors are still being developed, there is still the opportunity for people to become involved. Fulginiti said this week that she was waiting for more applications to market at the Sideling Hill location to come in, in response to phone calls from producers interested in marketing there.

She also said that the Turnpike Commission is currently in the process of drafting a design for a building, which is dependent on the number of vendors that are going to be able to market there.

(In the proposed legislation, there is no requirement for a building to be constructed, that is being done by the Turnpike Commission itself.)

Fulginiti said that small producers are as welcome to participate as are relatively large producers — "from a co-op to a very small farm," she said.

With respect to the Sideling Hill site, Fulginiti said there has been interest from a maple-products producer, vegetable and fruit producers, honey producers, flowers,

apple cider, and fruit basket producer in marketing their products.

So far, in order to qualify for the project, those involved must grow 50 percent of the produce they intend to sell. If they need more volume to supply demand, then they are allowed to market additional, purchased commodities, as long as those additional commodities were grown in Pennsylvania.

Fulginiti said a group of producers organizing around the Allentown Service Center had their first meeting last week, and details are still developing.

The next meeting for the Allentown Service Center roadside market has been set for 2:30 p.m., March 9 at the Allentown Service Center, located along the northeast extension. Anyone interested is invited to attend.

The proposed application form for Sideling Hill Farmers' Market requests the farm name, the name of the main contact person and names of others involved in the farm operation, the address, county, and relevant telephone numbers.

It also requests a list of the major products intended to be sold through the growers' market; a description of the farm operation; and if the farmer also operates another retail farm market or pick-your-own fields. (This is not to be construed in any way except for understanding the perspective of

the producer applying for participation.)

The proposed application also makes clear that all food safety, sanitation, health permits and labeling issues that apply to items being sold must conform with the requirements of the law.

Also, state sales tax is to be collected on products which are not eatable, as is required by law.

Miller said that she attended the first meeting of the producers involved so far in the pilot project site at Allentown, and is pleased by the interest and that the program is being developed by those who will have to live with the program and make it work.

She said she agrees with careful development of the roadside markets by the producers themselves, and that she wants the program to continue to be unfettered by political whims of government.

She has re-proposed her legislation, already reviewed by the Turnpike Commission, in order to officially authorize the program.

Ultimately, she said she wants the program to grow as big as it will through the initiative of the farmer-participants themselves, not through a government-created and mandated program.

For more information on the program, call Fulginiti at (717) 787-5086; or write to her at 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17710-9408.

1995 Dairy Of Distinction Farms Sought

Kingston (Luzerne Co.) — Do you take pride in maintaining your dairy farm? Does your dairy farm project an attractive, wholesome image to consumers? If so, the Dairy Of Distinction Program of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania will consider your farm for the program's annual recognition awards.

The Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program was first

started in 1983 to recognize the hard work and dedication of the farmers who maintain attractive farms. The purpose of the program is to instill a greater sense of confidence in the wholesomeness of dairy products, and increase their sales.

Farms that apply are judged on the roadside appearance of buildings, grounds, and surroundings, since this is what our dairy product

consumers observe as they drive by. The cleanliness of the barnyard, feed areas and manure management are other aspects of the farm operation taken into consideration. Roadside judging is conducted during the month of May. Former winners of past years are also rejudged to ensure they continue to meet the standards of excellence.

To qualify for consideration, you must be actively dairy farming and shipping milk. Applications are available from your state secretary, Pennsylvania: Paul Nichols, American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc., 239 Schuyler Avenue, Box 5, Kingston, Pa. 18704, (717) 283-2204, New York: Carol Weddle, N.Y. Holstein Association, 957 Mitchell Street, Ithaca N.Y. 14851, (607) 273-7591, or New Jersey: August Knispel, R.D. 1, Box 325, Pittstown, New Jersey 08867, (201) 735-4989. All applications must be completed and returned by April 15th, 1995.

The Dairy of Distinction program is financed in Pennsylvania by Dairy Farmers through the American Dairy Association Dairy Council and Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, plus Agribusiness organizations. The Pennsylvania Dairy Of Distinction Program is conducted with advice and help by Penn State cooperative extension.

HOW IS YOUR FARM SCORED?

Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program, Inc.

Awards will be based upon neatness, good maintenance and other factors which can be controlled by the farmer. Attractive background scenery should not be weighed heavily in judging. All judging observations should be made from a vehicle at one or more points on an adjacent public highway (or if farm is off the road, the nearest lane). Judging should give equal consideration to old wood construction and new construction of metal or concrete block.

The award program may be used for subsequent advertising or promotion activities for dairy products or dairy farming. Farmers who apply for awards agree that, if selected they will cooperate with these activities and make all reasonable efforts to maintain both the exterior and interior of their properties in an acceptable condition.

HOW THE APPLICATION WORKS

The owner or operator of the dairy farm should sign the application and send it to NEDFBP secretary by April 15.

HOW THE JUDGING WORKS

Judging teams will visit farms during the month of May. Farms will be judged each year as the award is presented on an annual basis. Any dairy failing to maintain appearance standards will be asked to remove their sign. The Dairy of Distinction signs remain the property of the committee, not the property of the dairy farmer. All farms must achieve a compliance score of 90 percent on their Dairy of Distinction score card. *Your cooperative or milk handler will be contacted to approve your milk quality.*

RULES FOR THE DAIRY OF DISTINCTION AWARD

1. The Dairy of Distinction sign remains the property of the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Committee.
2. The post and bracket shall be supplied by and maintained by the dairy farmer. It is suggested that a wood post 4' x 4' x 12' or iron pipe 2' x 12' be used. Posts or pipe should be installed and maintained in true vertical position with 8' above ground. Top of the bracket should be lower than six inches from the top of the post.
3. Sign shall be displayed in front of the dairy at roadside. An attractive post and bracket, or other frame, shall be used to display the sign. No more than three signs should be displayed from the sign frame or post, and all shall be of a style, general size and quality comparable to the Dairy of Distinction sign. Sign should be secured on all sides to avoid wind damage.
4. Signs shall not be moved to other premises. New owners of a Dairy of Distinction farm must apply to retain the sign.
5. Replacement of damaged signs shall be the discretion of the committee.
6. No producer shall be charged with scoring or sign expense.
7. Judges' decisions will be final.
8. Judging will take place between May 1st and May 31st.
9. Farms awarded a Dairy of Distinction sign in previous years will be judged between April 1st and April 30th. If they do not qualify, they will be rejudged between May 1st and May 31st so they have the opportunity to keep the sign.
10. Farms that do not requalify will return the sign to their regional Dairy of Distinction Committee.

Application

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

Attractive dairy farms give the consumer greater confidence in the wholesomeness of milk and stimulate milk sales which encourages public support for the dairy industry. The award gives recognition to the dairy farmer for maintaining a well-kept farmstead.

ELIGIBILITY

All Northeast dairy farms producing milk for sale are invited to make application for the award. Dairies receiving the 10 highest scores in each of the 91 districts will receive an 18" x 24" Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed in front of their farm.

APPLICATION

Your Name _____ Farm Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone Number (_____) _____

Cooperative or Handler (where you ship your Milk) _____
(Your Handler will be contacted to approve your milk quality)

Location (driving directions for judging team) _____

County (where your farm is located) _____

I hereby apply to the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Committee to have my dairy scored in accordance with the rules of the program for the purpose of obtaining a Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed on my premises. (No producer will be charged for scoring or sign expense.)

_____ Date _____

Signature of Owner/Operator

Return application by April 15. New York dairies send to Carol Weddle, New York Holstein Association, 957 Mitchell Street, P.O. Box 190, Ithaca, NY 14851; Pennsylvania dairies send to Paul Nichols, ADADC, Tower Business Building, 239 Schuyler Ave., Kingston, PA 18704; New Jersey dairies send to August Knispel, R.D. 1, Box 325, Pittstown, NJ 08867.

Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program Inc.

