

# Conservation District Directors To Visit Capitol

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — County conservation district directors will make their annual trip to the State Capitol on Monday, March 13 to better educate their legislators about the accom-

plishments and funding needs of conservation districts in natural resource protection.

More than 50 directors from many of the 66 conservation districts are expected to spend the

day visiting their local legislators to discuss issues of concern. District directors are volunteer local boards appointed by county commissioners to oversee the work of paid district staff.

The day is part of the week-long celebration of Conservation District Week, March 12-18, the 50th anniversary of Pennsylvania's law which established county conservation districts. Acting Secretary of the Department of Environmental Resources James Seif has been invited to present a proclamation by Governor Tom Ridge announcing Conservation District Week.

During their visits, directors will stress that stagnant state funding for conservation district core programs impacts the districts' abilities to properly administer some of the state's programs delegated from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER). The increase in state allocation from fiscal year 1993-1994 still

does not cover cost-sharing needs for conservation district technicians.

State funding is allocated to conservation districts through the State Conservation Commission for the employment of staff and special conservation projects. The current allocation provides an average \$33,712 per district for an average staff of 4.5 persons. Staff typically spend a majority of their time administering state-delegated programs. Because the Commission is housed within DER, districts have provided a strong form of local input and control of DER regulatory programs. Conservation districts have established a wide variety of natural resource programs that deal with agricultural and non-agricultural related issues.

## State Potato Growers Meeting

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The extension published a newsletter, Pest Alert, which provided a great deal of timely material about late blight and ways in which growers could work together to treat it.

Morrow spoke about the importance of sprayer calibration to make sure foliage is completely covered and treated to protect against the fungus.

Terry Bourgoin, director of plant industries, Maine Department of Agriculture, spoke about the importance of making sure the fungus does not overwinter in storage. He told growers about the importance of moving all the potatoes out of storage and cleaning and disinfecting the storage areas.

Bourgoin spoke about the statewide seedlot late blight screening program that provided information on total infection and how information can be applied to controlling late blight.

Dr. Donald Daum, Department of Ag Engineering, Penn State, provided information on "getting the whole plant covered" with a spray program. Daum spoke about how growers can achieve total coverage and selecting the right sprayer system for the task, choosing the best nozzle, and how to achieve proper droplet atomization, deposition, and minimize drift.

Coverage is the key factor in controlling diseases such as late blight.

At the Wednesday morning

meeting, Roger Springer, general manager of the cooperative, provided a financial overview. Also, Keith Musser, president of the cooperative, spoke to the members about how the cooperative is "doing more than just trying to market potatoes," including lobbying for grower concerns and taking a strong stand in opposing water usage fees by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission.

New directors were elected. They include District 1, Eugene Manifold, Stewartstown and District 3, Leroy Hoover, Patton, for three-year terms. Three new at-large directors were also elected: Timothy Geiger, Schnecksville, a one-year position; Mark Masser, Hegin, a two-year position; and Ferd Irish, Coudersport, a three-year position.

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