

Gov. Ridge Visits Pa. Department of Agriculture

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HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Gov. Tom Ridge visited the state Department of Agriculture building in Harrisburg Thursday to join Agriculture Secretary Charles Brosius in meeting with a delegation from the Mexican state of Hidalgo interested in establishing trade with Pennsylvania.

The visit by Gov. Ridge also included an address to the department's personnel, held in the lobby of the building. He told the employees that he wanted to thank them for service to the 12 million citizens of the state and for the employees' "advocacy on behalf of Pennsylvania agriculture."

In fact, it was evident from those involved with the day's events that many employees, not necessarily those of the department, have been working outside the expected boundaries of their jobs to support efforts to increase interest in Pennsylvania's agricultural commodities.

O. Frank DeGarcia, executive secretary of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board, was a key figure in bringing the delegation to Harrisburg. Last year he traveled to its capital city of Pachuca with Harrisburg Mayor Stephen Reed to establish better ties with the state, which has become a sister-state and sister-city to Harrisburg.

DeGarcia introduced the delegation before an audience of department officials, interested legislators, media representatives and several others in a conference room in the agriculture building.

Manuel Angel Nunez, secretary of commerce and economic development for Hidalgo, was the acting head of the delegation.

Nunez said that the reason for the delegation's visit to Harrisburg was to "establish a solid basis" for

trade between the two states.

He said that, thanks to the North American Free Trade Agreement, commerce has increased "dramatically," and even though the economy of Mexico has been initially hurt and the peso devalued, those problems will be overcome.

He said the "policies are painful, but they are the right ones," adding that within a short time, "We will be on track."

He said that he and the others were impressed by last year's visit by Mayor Reed. "He impressed us because of the job that was done with Harrisburg."

Nunez also talked about the tremendous support received from DeGarcia and others from Pennsylvania, and that they are interested in buying 3,000 dairy cattle, as well as sheep and technology, among other Pennsylvania agricultural commodities.

Nunez also said that the delegation was interested in visiting facilities in Pennsylvania, which was included on the tour following the official introductions.

Nunez said he also talked with Mayor Reed about a 120,000-acre development in Hidalgo including a new airport. He said the two areas complement each other well.

The international port in Philadelphia was also mentioned because of the import/export activities taking place there now.

"It is our intention to buy more from Pennsylvania, and yes, it is also our intention to sell more to Pennsylvania," he said, in order "to create wealth" for both communities, and more jobs here and there.

He also said that the leadership of Pennsylvania and the personal initiative of its leaders is known to leaders of Hidalgo.

In his address, state Ag Secretary Brosius welcomed the delega-

tion, speaking in Spanish, telling them that agriculture is the largest business in Pennsylvania, and that Pennsylvania has the largest agricultural community of any in the nation.

Brosius said, "As secretary, it is a privilege to represent the rural community in the (Ridge) administration. It's an honor to be part of the administration, and a privilege to serve with as fine a man as Gov. Ridge."

Ridge spoke next, saying that while Thursday was his first visit to the agriculture building, it will not be the last.

He said that he appreciated the work of Nunez and the rest of the delegation in laying groundwork better trade.

"With an eye toward the key-stone state of Mexico, Hidalgo, Pennsylvania has had an extraordinary relationship. Trade has continued to grow."

The governor said that while serving as a member of the U.S. Congress he supported both the NAFTA agreement and the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Further, Ridge said, "All of us share that, in our mutual best interest as neighbors, we need not set up defenses from each other," saying, in effect that it is best to develop a trusting relationship as a trading relationship is developed. He said that working from a defensive position wastes resources. He said that an enhanced trade relationship and partnerships is in the best interest of the people in both states.

Ridge also commented about the port of Philadelphia, and he said he was informed that currently Mexican products can be purchased there cheaper than in the port of San Francisco.

Ridge said, "We want to develop a better economic relationship, and look forward to exploring ways of doing that."

He said he would like to see "ships from Pennsylvania loaded full of cargo going to Mexico, and returning from Mexico full of cargo. Trade is a two-way street. We must work together to see that happens."

In discussing the need to do more to increase Pennsylvania's exporting capabilities, Ridge complimented Mayor Reed, saying that he is "an incredible leader, not only within Harrisburg, but within the region."

"We have not been as aggressive as we need to be," Ridge said about government helping to deve-



On the sidewalk in front of the headquarters building to the state Department Agriculture, Gov. Tom Ridge is greeted by state Secretary of Agriculture Charles Brosius. It was Ridge's first visit to the agriculture department.

lop or support more export possibilities. "This (delegation visit) is a step in the direction to building a foundation."

The delegation presented Gov. Ridge with a present — a handmade comforter and pillows with a bird design similar to the Pennsylvania German Distelfink — while Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Walter Peechatka presented the delegation with a gift basket filled with Pennsylvania commodities.

After making his remarks to the delegation, Gov. Ridge and Secretary Brosius left the room to address the department employees in the building's lobby.

In the meantime, Holly Gerke, who works with the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, and

ProGenetics To Sponsor Pig Sale April 21

ELIZABETHTOWN (Lancaster Co.)—ProGenetics, a division of White Oak Mills, Inc., will hold its Seventh Project Feeder Pig Sale on Friday, April 21 at 7 p.m. at the Manheim Farm Show Building.

Approximately 175 Pietrain x Duroc, Pietrain x Hampshire, and other crosses weighing 40-100

pounds will be auctioned off by Auctioneer John D. Stauffer, AU-1509.

All feeder pigs are from validated or monitored herds. 4-H and FFA members are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be available. For more information, please call Marlin Becker at (800) 468-5524 or (717) 665-7283.

Accompanying the delegation, in addition to agriculture department officials were state Sens. Noah Wenger, David Brightbill, and Roger Madigan.



Gov. Tom Ridge displays a pillow and holds a comforter in his other hand. The gifts are handmade items from the Mexican state of Hidalgo.



State Gov. Tom Ridge and Agriculture Secretary Charles Brosius stand with members of a Mexican trade delegation. From the left is Manuel Angel Nunez, Hidalgo secretary of industry and commerce; Secretary Brosius; Rafael Arriaga Paz, constitutional municipal president of Pachuca, capital of Hidalgo; Gov. Ridge; Margarita Ramirez de Arriaga, wife of Paz; and Prof. Joel Guerrero Juarez, Hidalgo secretary of agriculture.



These ProGenetics feeder pigs will be auctioned off at the ProGenetics 7th Project Feeder Pig Sale April 21 at the Manheim Farm Show Building.