

# Technology, Politics Continue American Ag Metamorphism

(Continued from Page A1)

## Perceptions

From gleaning through the past year's papers, and from ongoing coverage of events, organizations and institutions, the perspective is that 1995 was a tough year for many people — those directly involved in agriculture and those working in other vocations.

There is no doubt that American agriculture has become more condensed. Cooperative mergers, processor mergers, fewer businesses involved and more foreign ownership of food processing and distribution all indicate the year continued the trend of recent years toward a bottom-line driven industry.

To draw an analogy, the industry appears to be undergoing a process of "metamorphism."

The definition of the term is specific. When the basic constitution of a rock changes and becomes more compact and crystalline because of the effects of heat, pressure and water, the process is called "metamorphism."

It is the process that changes coal into a diamond.

If agriculture were to be considered a "rock," then it could be viewed as undergoing the process of metamorphism.

Whether or not the pressures on agriculture result in a diamond, the change has been happening.

To give the year some historical perspective, the breakup of the former Soviet Union and the consequent reorganizational efforts there have had significant effects on business in the United States.

No longer do we have a large common enemy with a name and a face. Without a common enemy, people tend to seek out new causes for which to fight and it seems that for now, the fights are among ourselves.

As people attempt to position themselves for a secure life and attempt to digest the onslaught of technology that has been created and discovered, it can be expected that this virtual "pushing and shoving" will continue.

It seems that it has been a tough year because of all the changes and so many uncertainties about all aspects of life for so many people.

Mostly, it seems that people have been uncertain about everyday things such as prices, markets,

policies, leaders, regulations, freedoms, privileges, taxes, truth of information, and personal safety.

Uncertainty was evident this past year in national politics with continued episodic battles between the House and Senate Republicans, the Democrats, the President and his administration, and the Washington and sensationalistic media.

Many times national news coverage of Washington and our national leaders were at best displays of juvenile tantrums and power-mongering.

There are plenty of examples of heated battles closer to home.

State government has undergone some upheaval under the influence of Gov. Tom Ridge, a former U.S. Congressman from Erie who took office this year, the influence of Republican majorities in the Senate and House, and that of influential or concerned citizens.

The state Department of Environmental Resources — which was seen as a bloated, underfunded, politically influenced anathema to common sense — was divided into two houses.

The regulatory bureaus and divisions of the former DER have been lumped under the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with the name outlining its mission.

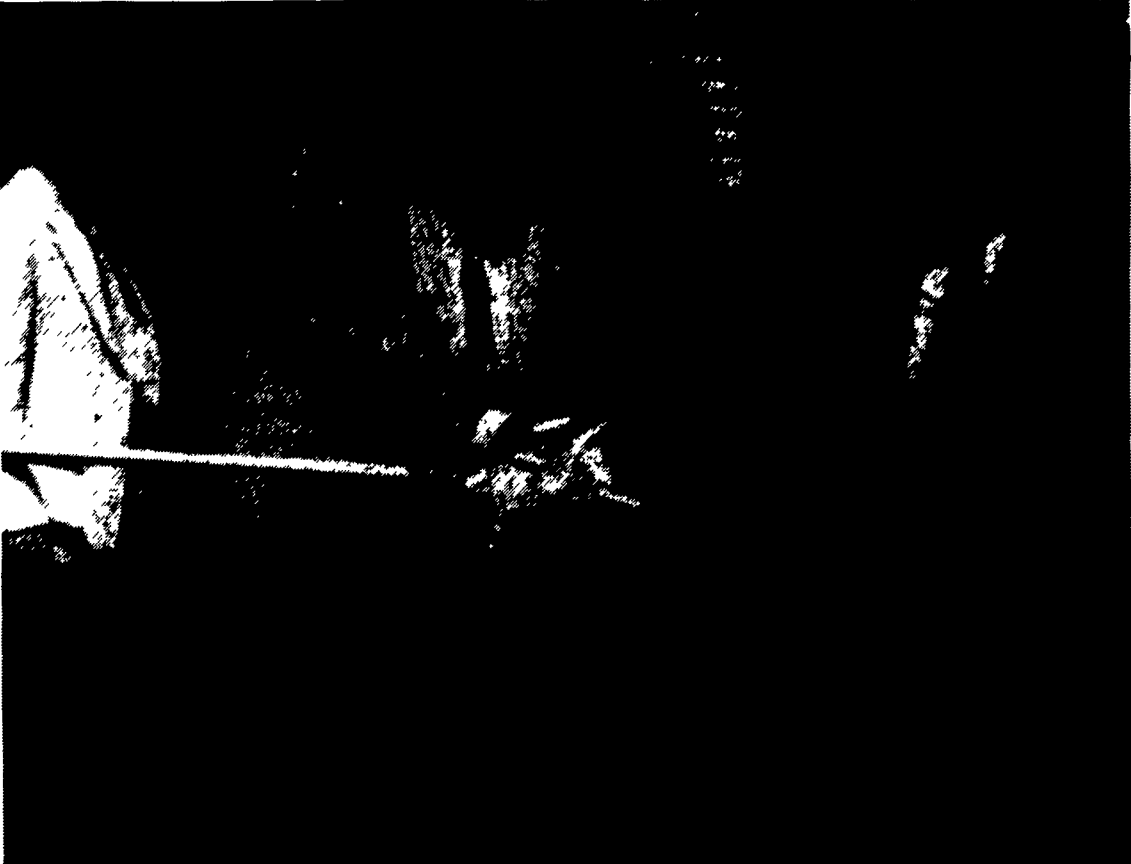
The state forests, minerals and park system have been given their own house at the governor's cabinet level — the Department of Conservation of Natural Resources.

Further, Ridge appointed cabinet secretaries to run his administrative agencies with the mission directive that they are to help achieve success with compliance by working with companies in a cooperative manner.

Like the "good cop, bad cop" contrast, the trend is to get away from the perception of state agencies enforcing regulations through overworked, civil servant tough guys with a heartless, by-the-book enforcer approach.

Instead the workers are to have concern about the possible consequences of destroying business.

According to a recent published report, DEP did not fine businesses this year as much as DER had been, and has been working with



From the left, Daniel Hagen, past dean of the PSU College of Agricultural Sciences Lamartine Hood Oble Snider, state Secretary of Agriculture Charles Brosius, and Harry Roth of Atlantic Breeders Cooperative, cut the ribbon on the \$5.5 million dairy research center.

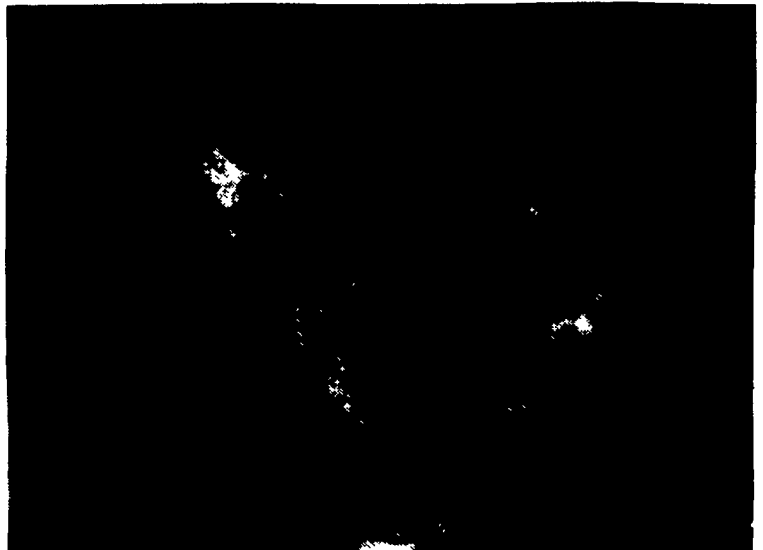
problem business to find acceptable alternatives to environmental problems.

With the appointment of Chester County mushroom agribusinessman Charles Brosius as secretary of agriculture, Ridge said he was selecting someone who shared his concern of helping people to stay in business, through education and through working diligently to get Pennsylvania commodities marketed.

O. Frank DeGarcia, the executive secretary of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board wore a number of different hats in 1995.

In addition to running the PMMB which protects consumers and ensures that producers get their proper milk check, he also is council president for the city of Harrisburg.

In that role, he was also instrumental in helping establish a relationship between Pennsylvania and Hidalgo and Vera Cruz, Mexico. As a result, a group of Mexican delegates visited Pennsylvania this year meeting with state sena-



From the left, Pennsylvanian John Cope, elected president of the National Holstein Association, talks with outgoing president John Selz during the national convention held this year in Pittsburgh.

tors, the governor, Secretary Brosius and DeGarcia.

They toured different businesses and discussed using facilities to market goods. A large shipment of Pennsylvania cattle to Mexico was a result of those talks.

The enhancement of the state's natural resources and its park system, and advertising it to attract tourists, along with trying to get manufacturing and exporting increased to even more significant levels has become the strategy for getting the state out of its economic doldrums.

## Background

The end of the Cold War caused the loss of a reason to work and spend money for many, many people, including all American people — i.e. the government.

The negative economic and social effects of ending the Cold War and trying to pay off the national debt were and are expected to be great.

Exporting American goods and services has been seen as a way to replace the jobs for the military/industrial labor force that had been built up tremendously since the turn of the century (and even more so during the presidency of Ronald Regan) in the fight of "communism."

The nation has been left with tremendous debt from its wars and peacetime military/industrial

growth.

To help fight the Cold War, the United States had built up businesses in nations such as Germany, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, and set up protectionist trade agreements whereby those countries, some small and resource poor, could build wealth in the face of neighboring dirt-poor communist nations. (Some of the communist nations built phony "model" cities close to borders so that anti-communists could see how well people were living.)

Over the years, unrealistic work compensation demands by American labor unions, a get-mine greed ethic, and seemingly ridiculous legal liabilities against American manufactures, the businesses that America helped build overseas have helped to put many Americans out of work and on the streets.

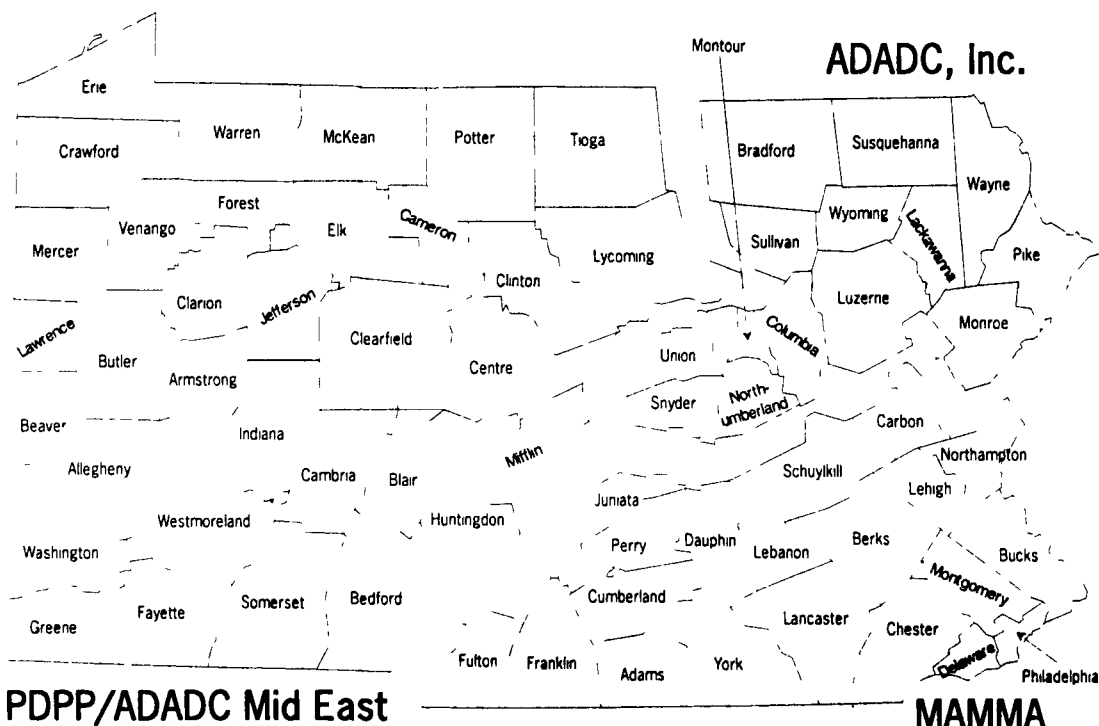
Now, at the end of the Cold War, the reason to continue trade agreements which protect other nations' economies at the expense of American business has gotten harder to justify.

Overpopulation has again become a prominent word as refugees from all over the world continue to enter America to escape the horrors of tyranny, terrorism, ignorance and poverty.

Further, some large corporations have become "global" and continue to take advantage of low wages, poor living conditions and

(Turn to Page A24)

## Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Service Areas



PDPP/ADADC Mid East

MAMMA

The PDPP/Mid-East ADADC, MAMMA and ADADC Inc. in New York have struck a cooperative agreement to become more efficient in using dairy farmer funds to promote milk. The state is now split up in responsibility between the three groups, working all together to prevent duplication of effort and waste.