

Technology, Politics Continue American Ag Metamorphosis

(Continued from Page A24)

State Conservation Commission (which oversees conservation districts and is integral to carrying out the state's Nutrient Management Act) went from being a DEP-staffed organization chaired by the secretary of DEP, to one situated in the Department of Agriculture building with an independent staff and a rotating chair between the secretaries of DEP and PDA.

An important legislative milestone was the passage of laws to facilitate the reuse of industrial sites without having to detoxify the sites to pre-industrial conditions. Under a government-industry partnership, an acceptable compromise is to be worked out in containing onsite contaminations and to allow industry to again use what are for the most part abandoned areas blighting many of the state's cities and towns.

The first legislation for local tax reform just recently was passed and, according to a Senate analysis of Senate Bill 2, "is to allow local governments the option of reducing property taxes by simplifying their local tax system (through the elimination of nuisance taxes), by collecting an income tax.

"With voter approval, counties would have the option of imposing a sales tax. Voters would also have the option of becoming a Home Rule school district (for tax structure purposes only).

"Voter approval would be needed before a local government could collect the new taxes. Once

property taxes are reduced, future property tax increases would require voter approval."

A court-ordered countywide tax reassessment for Lancaster has caused a lot of headaches for farmers and landowners here. Whether or not local tax reform becomes effective enough to prevent people from leaving their farms is uncertain, but because of problems with the reassessments, implementation has been postponed.

Dairy promotion in Pennsylvania was completely revised as a new merger and cooperative agreements were established.

A longstanding dispute between rival entities working to secure solid promotion programs and dependable flows of funding was finally resolved this July.

On July 1, the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program merged with the Mid-East UDIA to form Mid East ADADC.

It gets a little complicated, but the Middle Atlantic Milk Marketing Association (MAMMA) had been operating in the southeast part of the state, overlapping some areas hit by the PDPP and by the New York ADADC Inc.

What has happened is that now the PDPP board of directors remains intact and oversees the marketing programming for 33 counties in central and western Pennsylvania, while MAMMA has 20 in the southcentral and southeast, and ADADC Inc. has the northeast quarter's 14 counties.

The divisions were made

according to population areas and media areas, as well as reflecting the location of certain dairy farmer promotion funds.

The result is an end to the disputes over funding and better efficiency in getting the most dairy promotion for the least amount of dollar.h

The PDPP effort is now part of the effort to promote dairy products on behalf of dairy producers in Ohio, West Virginia, northern Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

The state Farm Link Program saw its first success this year. The Farm-Link Program is a part of the Center For Rural Pennsylvania, a legislative organization. Farm Link has a mission of helping to bring older and younger generation people together to attempt to work out a person-to-person agreement on transferring the farm.

It's an attempt to stem the loss of family farms.

The National Holstein Convention was held in Pennsylvania this past year, only the sixth time in the organization's 110-history.

The National Grange also held its convention in the Keystone State, marking a significant honor for the Pennsylvania State Grange.

The Chesapeake Bay Executive Council approved a local initiative program while Gov. Ridge in remarks said that farmers apparently are not as much to blame for the high nitrogen levels in the Susquehanna River and that more work needed to be done with wastewater treatment plant discharge nitrogen releases.

The Game Commission approved deer permits to farmers to give out for an off-season hunting season. After years of requesting a useful and safe program with farmer control, the commission finally gave it so that crop-damaging deer can be shot and harvested during the early spring and late summer.

The commission requires that a farm be enrolled in the commission's Hot Spot program for several years, and allow public access during regular season.

Other highlights of the year:
• Lancaster Dairy Herd Improvement Association became

a national affiliate this past year and reports doing well.

• Pa.DHIA pioneered milk urea nitrogen testing for its members and also performance economics.

• Penn State dedicated a new \$5.5 million dairy cattle research center.

• A world record for milk production was set in May with Raim Mark Jinx, a registered Holstein, making 60,440 pounds of milk in 365 days. She made 1,938 pounds of fat and 1,884 pounds of protein. She was milked three times per day and was given bovine somatotropin.

Cooperative Councils Selected State Winners

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The National Planning Committee for October Cooperative Month is pleased to announce that the Cooperative Council of North Carolina and the Kansas Cooperative Council will be honored for outstanding cooperative service on behalf of the cooperative community.

Each year, the committee recognizes a state cooperative council or organization whose activities during the past cooperative month celebration best illustrates the theme, "Cooperatives—Expanding People's Horizons." The awards will be presented during the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives' annual meeting Jan. 24 in Washington, D.C.

"We are honored to present this award to two states who have done an outstanding job communicating the cooperative message to their local communities," said Sheldon C. Petersen, chairman of the National Cooperative Month Planning Committee. "Both the Cooperative Council of North Carolina and the Kansas Cooperative Council exemplify this year's Cooperative Month theme."

The Cooperative Council of North Carolina brought cooperation to new heights by using hot air balloons to celebrate co-op month. Held in three strategic cities across the state, the colorful

balloons attracted attention and provided the opportunity for co-op employees to share with the public how cooperatives expand people's horizons. A local radio personality broadcasted from the event—once from high up in the hot air balloon—and helped promote cooperatives to his radio audience.

The Kansas Cooperative Council opened new lines of cooperative communication by organizing three legislative luncheons, giving cooperators and legislators an opportunity to get better acquainted. The lawmakers were all surprised to learn how many cooperatives businesses and employees they had in their districts. Local co-ops—from credit unions to farm supply—shared the co-op message by conducted coloring contests that reached more than 1,000 school children, essay and poster contests, barbecues and open houses, and food drives that included cooperative brand foods.

The cooperative community has been celebrating October Cooperative Month for more than 60 years. Cooperative month activities are coordinated by Washington, D.C.-based committees and are sponsored by more than 20 national cooperative organizations and government agencies with special cooperative relationships.

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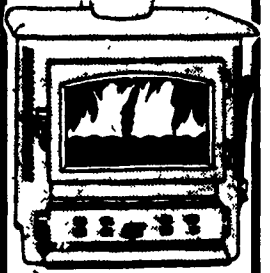
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