

# Lancaster Farming

Vol. 41 No. 42

Four Sections

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, August 24, 1996

\$27.50 Per Year

60¢ Per Copy

## State Rep Heads Effort To Eliminate PMMB Pricing Authority

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.

Lancaster Farming Staff  
ARDMORE (Montgomery Co.) — The state House of Representatives State Government Committee held a public hearing Wednesday at the Lower Merion Township building in Ardmore to collect testimony on a legislative proposal that would eliminate the authority of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board (PMMB) to set minimum retail prices.

The proposal, House Bill 2628, was made by state Rep. Colleen Sheehan, R-King of Prussia, who in her Wednesday testimony said her intent in proposing the legislation was on behalf of "the taxpayers and schools," claiming that the PMMB's practice of setting minimum retail prices for fluid milk is "corporate welfare."

She cited a 67-cent difference in retail price of a gallon of milk sold in same-chain supermarket stores — one in Pennsylvania, the other in Maryland which does not have minimum retail prices for milk — as evidence that Pennsylvanians are in essence being gouged by the PMMB.

"Are Pennsylvania consumers and children being milked? Why are a few industry and corporate types getting corporate welfare

and being treated like sacred cows, while the people of Pennsylvania are being treated like chopped liver?" she asked.

The majority of testimony presented by those opposed to the proposal cited the long-standing reason for giving the PMMB such authority — to ensure adequate supplies of fresh, inexpensive drinking milk for all Pennsylvanians by ensuring a reasonable profit for retailers, and, ipso facto, an opportunity for adequate profit by the processors and farmers.

The proposal to eliminate the PMMB minimum-price setting authority (something attempted in recent years by surrounding states, though courts struck down some of those attempts because they weren't constructed quite the same) was made June 11 (Dairy Month) by Sheehan, a 40-year-old former college professor of social

science and first-term representative up for re-election in November.

The hearing continued from 11 a.m. through 6 p.m. with a half-hour break for a late lunch. Attendance at the hearing was a standing-room only in the 72-seat board room of the Lower Merion Township Building. In addition to those seated, there were about 20 people standing around the walls at any one time, with people leaving and others arriving regularly.

As far as a piece of legislation, this bill is still far from being law.

It must be brought out of the State Government Committee, chaired by Rep. Paul Clymer, R-Perkasie, and sent to the floor of the House. It could be referred to another committee, and on and on, until it has been before the House for a third and final consideration.

If approved by the House, it

would then go to the state Senate, where it can be assumed additional hearings would be held and a similar process of review would have to be undergone.

If the House version would pass through the Senate without amendments it would go to the governor's office for his signature and approval.

Both the House and Senate reconvene in September. They can be expected to break again for elections in November, and they may or may not continue again before the regular holiday break.

One of the few agricultural supporters of the bill was the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

Mel Eckhaus, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau director of state legislative programs, testified that it was the member-delegate approved policy (made last November at the PFB annual meet-

ing) to oppose retail price-setting of milk.

It was explained through questioning by committee member Rep. Tom Barley, R-Lancaster, also a member of PFB, how policy is developed in the organization — that all policy ideas are developed first at the county level through suggestions by individuals, then further considered, if supported locally, at the state level.

Though not explained during the hearing, a policy committee takes all the policies developed locally across the state and develops policy statements, in other words, they condense several similar policy concepts into one policy for consideration. When a policy statement is unique it doesn't require condensing.

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## Hog Is Named E-town Supreme

LOU ANN GOOD  
Lancaster Farming Staff

ELIZABETHTOWN (Lancaster Co.) — The most perfect animal at the Elizabethtown Fair turned out to be a hog. The Hamp cross named Jasmine was a homebred hog shown by Gerald Boyd, 17, of Ephrata.

Gerald and his sister Sarah raise about 20 hogs to show at area fairs and are consistent winners. However, this was the first time one of their hogs captured the title Supreme Champion Animal.

The showdown among the supreme champions of dairy, swine, sheep, goat, and beef happened Thursday evening at the fairgrounds. Judges of each breed debated about 30 minutes before proclaiming that the hog was the finest specimen of its species.

After the naming of the supreme champion livestock, Harry Bachman, Auctioneers conducted a livestock sale. Sold were 47 market market lambs, eight goats, seven beef, and 105 hogs. Bidding was brisk with Gerald's supreme hog selling for \$625 to Fulton Bank.

Gerald's sister Sarah sold her reserve champion hog for \$400 to Hoss's Steak and Sea House, which donated it to the Elizabethtown Community Action Food Bank.

The champion selling lamb  
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## Lancaster Tobacco Crop Big And Heavy This Year

With all the rain, Lancaster County's tobacco crop grew fast and heavy this year. Roger Rohrer, who is Corestates Bank's vice president of agri-finance, takes vacation days to harvest tobacco on his home farm. Rohrer said many times in a wet, cool year the tobacco is not as good. But this year, especially, on well-drained soils, tobacco farmers have a nice crop.

On not-so-well drained soils or where the heavy rains took the nutrients below the root system the crop is short and has a yellow color. And some blue mold has been reported. But Rohrer estimates that 70 to 80 percent of the crop is the right size and of good color.

Now farmers need days with heat and low humidity to

cure the tobacco in the barns. The fields have yielded the promise of a good crop, but with the extra moisture in the leaves this year, the curing process will have an even greater effect on the final quality of the crop.

Rohrer started harvesting on Monday, Aug. 5 and has 6,000 of his expected 11,500 lathes in the barns. In the photo, Rohrer's tobacco harvesting crew takes a small break Wednesday afternoon to pose with a sample of the big tobacco farmers are harvesting this year. From left, David Martin, Mark Rohrer, Ashlee Rohrer, Les Furlow, Roger Rohrer, Todd Rohrer, and Chad Gunzenhouser. Photo by Everett Newswanger, managing editor.