

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Honors Achievements

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PFB policy as a major reason to eliminate the minimum retail price-setting authority.

The argument was that the state's largest farmer organization was opposed to the authority of the PMMB, therefore it was time to eliminate it.

Dairy producer members of PFB at the hearing said that the policy didn't reflect the desires of the farm organization's dairy producers and predicted the reversal.

Further, it was stated that while the PFB has maintained otherwise constant support for the PMMB's minimum price-setting powers, years ago the PFB had actually adopted a one-year policy stance against the PMMB's authority. That was reversed the following year, as was the case this week.

Philadelphia-area politicians have to deal with a constituency that differs in many ways from the rest of the state. However, the School District of Philadelphia has been one of the strongest decriers of the PMMB.

The school district has attempted to have the PMMB authority eliminated through legal challenge, though a recent challenge failed.

Some claim the district was disingenuous because after it complained about possibly paying 5 cents more per half-pint of milk than a nearby unregulated New Jersey school district, and the PMMB lowered the region's minimum price by a couple cents per half pint based on all testimony (cost of production and hauling and ability to pay are also used to determine fairness of price), the school district never passed the savings onto the school children.

Nevertheless, the change in policy reverts the PFB to its former and long-standing position in support of the PMMB.

The PFB sets policy at the county level. County policies are forwarded to the state committee for condensation and to eliminate redundancy. Then, at the state convention, delegates debate the policies before settling down to a final vote.

Other policy highlights of the 46th meeting included a recommendation that federal milk marketing orders and all unregulated counties in the Northeastern states be combined into one new Northeastern federal milk marketing order.

The 1996 U.S. Farm Bill calls for such a combining of federal orders.

The delegate body adopted policy opposing efforts by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to take over the operation and maintenance of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Interim policy — that which is set by the organization's board of directors between annual conventions — that called for increasing state spending for bridge and road repairs and that those additional funds be actually used for repairs and are shared with local governments was affirmed by the delegates and is now official policy.

In awards presentations, the organization also announced its outstanding young farmer couple. Duane and Marilyn Hershey, of Cochransville, were named winners.

The award is presented annually to a farmer or farm couple between the ages of 18 and 35, who have



The strength of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is its grass-roots policy making system. Here the PFB's 170 voting delegates present locally developed policies for debate

and consideration as state policy. Delegate debate is ongoing for most of the convention, culminating in final policy being set the last day.

demonstrated exemplary farm business and leadership achievements.

There were three finalist couples competing for the award. The other two couples were Chris and Sandy Pilgram, of Fredonia, and Nelson and Marilyn Beam, of Elverson. All three finalist couples received a \$100 savings bond.

As the winners, the Hersheys also received a \$500 cash award from Dodge Truck and an expense-paid trip to the National Farm Bureau annual meeting, to be held in January in Nashville.

The Hersheys operate a 350-acre dairy farm in Chester County and milk 75 registered Holsteins. They also have won the Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Award for their conservation practices, and have improved their dairy operation with additional stalls, cow mattresses, a totally mixed ration, and tunnel ventilation.

Duane is currently vice president of the Chester/Delaware County Farm Bureau board of directors and he also serves on the local board for Atlantic Dairy Cooperative.

The Hersheys have participated in the Holstein Foundation's Young Dairy Leadership program, and in 1994, Duane and his father, state Rep. Art Hershey, received the Pennsylvania Master Farmer Award.

The outstanding farmer award was made during the President's Luncheon.

During the luncheon, PFB President Guy Donaldson told the group that during the past year the organization set a record for membership, signing a total of 26,625 members during the year, which represented a one-year membership increase of 750 members.

Donaldson said that the organization must continue to keep its goals high and said he predicted that the coming year will also see a record number of new members, with a possible membership of 30,000 by 2000.

The theme for this year's convention was, "PFB: Solving Your Problems."

Donaldson said that solving problems through setting policy from the local level first and then acting as one voice was the greatest strength of the organization.

"Many of our policies have become law," he said, adding that delegates must be careful to debate issues fully and to treat policy setting with the respect it deserves.

He said that if they don't do so, members may find themselves with what they have asked. And they might not like it.

"Many, many laws have been adopted, reviewed or discontinued as a result of our (policy making)

system," he said.

Donaldson reviewed a lengthy list of current laws that benefit agriculture and production farmers and rural Pennsylvanians that were first reflected in PFB policy.

He said that while the PFB is not alone, or in some cases, not even most responsible for achieving that policy into law, it was PFB policy and that helps achieve more widely accepted policy.

Donaldson also said that change is inevitable, but that members

of Columbus, Warren County.

Martha Rhoades of Emlenton, Clarion County, became the first woman to receive the organization's "Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award." Mrs. Rhoades was cited for her dedication and commitment to agriculture and Farm Bureau.

Martha Rhoades served on Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's board of directors representing the Armstrong, Clarion, Elk and Jefferson county farm bureaus from 1981 to

presenting the award. "She is a shining example of the strength and dedication of our volunteer leaders."

The Berks County Farm Bureau was named PFB's "All Star" County for the sixth consecutive year. The award is PFB's most prestigious program award, recognizing excellence in all Farm Bureau program categories. The presentations took place during the annual member recognition Banquet, Tuesday evening.



Seated, Marilyn and Duane Hershey hold their outstanding farm couple award, and are joined by, from the left, standing, Brian Dietrich, chairperson of the award committee, and the two other finalist couples, Nelson and Marilyn Beam, and Sandy and Chris Pilgram.

need not fear change. Rather they must be prepared for that change when it comes. Debating policy at the local level helps keep members prepared for change.

Voting Delegates also elected two new members and returned six others to the PFB State Board of Directors. Two-year terms had expired in eight of the 16 districts represented on the State Board. Newly elected to the Board are: Jane Balmer of Mt. Joy, a dairy and poultry farmer, who has served as president of the Lancaster County Farm Bureau for the past six years; and Rick Ebert of Blairsville, a dairy farmer, who served on Farm Bureau state and national Young Farmer and Rancher Committees and is a past president of the Westmoreland County Farm Bureau.

Re-elected to the State Board are: Clarence Berger of Kintnersville, Bucks County; Kent Shellhamer, Jr. of Berwick, Columbia County; Donn Fetterolf of Aaronsburg, Centre County; Wayne Freeman of Elliottsburg, Perry County; Jerome Carl of Dysart, Cambria County and Harold Cur-

1989. After leaving the state board she became involved in the PFB state women's committee and served as its chairperson from 1989 until she retired from the committee last year. As committee chairperson she also held a seat on the PFB state board of directors.

Martha and her husband Richard Rhoades have been farming in Clarion County for 53 years. They operate a 1,000-acre dairy and crop farm with 195 cows. Martha became active in the Clarion County Farm Bureau during the 1970's. She served in several leadership positions including county secretary, information director, newsletter editor, Agriculture in the Classroom coordinator, members committee chairperson, county board member, national legislative committee member, AG Literacy coordinator, and Friends of Agriculture committee member. She and her husband are also members of a Farm Bureau advisory council.

"Martha is always positive and possesses a can-do attitude," said PFB President Guy Donaldson in

County president Edward Hartman of Reading accepted the PFB "All Star" award on behalf of the county farm bureau's 1,540 members. In addition to the award for excellence in all programs, Berks County received individual awards for outstanding Political Education and Contract Services programs. Other county farm bureaus were also honored for best overall programs during the banquet. Clinton County took top honors for county farm bureaus with up to 350 members; Susquehanna County was recognized in the 351 to 500 member category; and Lehigh County received the second place award for counties with over 500 members. Berks took first place in that category in addition to the All Star award.

The winner of the 1996 Discussion Meet sponsored by PFB's Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee was also announced during the recognition banquet. Eight young farmers competed earlier in the day in the Farm Bureau program which is

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