

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau National Legislative Tour Set

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — Pennsylvania farmers will be meeting with their congressmen and U.S. senators to discuss the need for action on priority farm concerns during Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's Washington Tour, March 5 - 6.

About 200 farmers will be traveling from across the state to participate in the annual event. The farmers, who are members of county farm bureau national legislative committees, will be meeting face-to-face with their elected representatives to express their concerns. "We will be recommending Congressional action based on policies developed by the grassroots membership of our organization," said PFB President Guy Donaldson of Adams County.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization which represents 26,625 farm and rural families in 54 county units. It is a part of the nation's largest general farm organization, the 4.7-million member American Farm Bureau Federation.

Among the top national issues concerning Farm Bureau members are budget reform and tax relief. Farm Bureau policy strongly supports a constitutional amendment to balance the federal government and bring government spending under control. An amendment passed the House last session but failed in the Senate by

one vote. New legislation has been introduced and will be voted on soon in the House and Senate. Farm Bureau urges passage of the amendment which would ban deficit spending unless three-fifths of the members of Congress vote otherwise. "Congress has not balanced a federal budget on its own since 1969. Interest on the federal debt now consumes 20 percent of tax revenues — money that could be better spent on essential government programs or for pro-growth tax cuts," said Donaldson.

The current capital gains tax hurts agriculture and other businesses that rely on intensive investments in property and equipment in order to operate. Most capital gains in agriculture are due to inflation. Farmland is held an average of over 28 years during which time the price level in the U.S. more than quadruples. As a result, farmers pay huge capital gains tax bills on inflationary — rather than real — increases in the value of their investments. Farm Bureau wants the 28 percent capital gains tax rate reduced to below 15 percent or, even better, eliminated altogether. "A capital gains cut would spur economic growth and create jobs," Donaldson said.

Over 99 percent of all farms in the U.S. are family-operated. "Current estate taxes make it difficult to pass the family farm from one generation to the next," Donaldson said. "Present laws often

force the sale of part of the family farm in order to pay the estate taxes." Farm Bureau policy calls for increasing the estate tax exemption from the current \$600,000 level to \$2 million and indexing it for inflation. In calculating estate taxes, farmland should be assessed at its agricultural, rather than its market value. "We also believe estate taxes should be deferred until the farm is sold outside the family," Donaldson said.

Agriculture has been accused of being the major culprit in the non-point source pollution of rivers and streams. Since non-point pollution doesn't come from any place specific like a factory smokestack or a sewage plant pipe, it's difficult to pinpoint its exact source. Other sources, such as stream bank erosion, runoff from urban development, storm water runoff or wildlife waste — cannot be distinguished from agricultural sources. "Farmers have already taken positive steps to reduce nonpoint source pollution," Donaldson said. "Soil erosion rates have been reduced by 24 percent over the last 10 years." Soil erosion on 36.5 million acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program has been cut by 90 percent. As Congress moves to rewrite the Clean Water Act, Farm Bureau wants to make sure the new law includes better methods to determine the extent of differ-

ent sources of pollution, as well as accurate ways to evaluate the effectiveness of farm conservation practices. Future Clean Water programs should rely on voluntary cooperation rather than strict regulatory enforcement and should provide information, technical assistance and adequate cost-sharing funds to help farmers implement conservation practices.

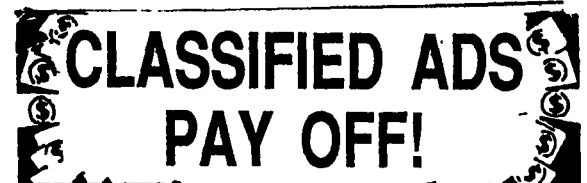
The Clean Water Act also contains the basis for wetlands regulations which have been expanded far beyond the original intent of the 1972 law by regulatory agencies and the courts. "The current wetlands policy has become a restrictive land-use policy affecting mostly private property owners," said Donaldson.

Congress has never defined "wetlands" in law. Federal agencies have expanded, without public input, the interpretation of what constitutes wetlands. They are now regulating many areas that never have water on the surface and, in fact, are dry. Farm Bureau wants Congress to take responsibility for deciding the national

wetlands policy. "Laws and regulations governing wetlands should be written so that an average person can recognize a wetland," Donaldson said.

A ban preventing the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) from issuing rules on workplace ergonomic injuries expired last October. "The Ergonomic Protection Standard has received little attention so far in farm circles," said Donaldson, "But it could become the most costly regulation ever to hit agriculture." As defined by OSHA, an ergonomic hazard is any activity that causes fatigue or discomfort in workers. "That could be almost any manual activity in farming,"

Donaldson said, "Farmers will be forced to double their labor force to meet ergonomic requirements. Complaints of fatigue or sore muscles would be enough to trigger OSHA enforcement." Farm Bureau wants Congress to delay OSHA's ergonomics rule until there is a scientific consensus on the cause and remedies for ergonomic injuries.



Maryland DHIA

(Continued from Page A20)

HIGH HERDS ECM BY BREED

AYRSHIRE

County Ass'n	Herd Name	# Cows in Herd	ECM
Howard	David & James Patrick	55	617
Washington	Ralph W. Shank	112	671
Carroll	Flint Hill Farm	10	586
Frederick	Vales-Pride	36	560
Carroll	R-Lyn Farm	10	511
Howard	Edgewood Farms Inc	21	426

HIGH HERDS ECM BY BREED

BROWN SWISS

County Ass'n	Herd Name	# Cows in Herd	ECM
Frederick	Dublin Hills Swiss	51	764
Carroll	Garstlyn Brown Swiss	35	695
Cecil	Joy and Tom Crothers	12	694
Frederick	K. Scott & Judy Hood	21	687
Frederick	Fir Thorne-B	30	683
Montgomery	Rudell C. Beall & Sons	11	680
Carroll	Bells Delight Farm	25	596
Frederick	Dwayne & Miriam Bell	70	590
Washington	Frey Fleming & Bassler	44	559
Carroll	Ryan Bell	12	508

HIGH HERDS ECM BY BREED

GUERNSEY

County Ass'n	Herd Name	# Cows in Herd	ECM
Cecil	Mt. Ararat Farms	49	566
Kent	Keith Dixon	19	554
Washington	John & Wm. Schnebly	81	542
Cecil	England Farms Inc	11	534
Queen Anne's	William B. Messix III	20	523
Queen Anne's	Level Square Associates	74	477
Kent	Dogwood Lane Farm	46	453
Frederick	Anovadale Guernseys	33	427

HIGH HERDS ECM BY BREED

JERSEY

County Ass'n	Herd Name	# Cows in Herd	ECM
Carroll	Queen Acres Jerseys	134	708
Washington	Michael Forsythe	16	619
Garrett	Paul & Naomi Petersheim	32	613
Frederick	Gaywinds Farm	62	583
Carroll	Ash & Bear	15	555
Kent	P. Thomas Mason	29	532
Cecil	101-Je So Farm 2	13	523
Carroll	Maryland Sunset View	85	480
Carroll	Mayer's Stoney Point	16	474
Frederick	Janeva Jerseys	28	471

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