

## Penn State Signs Agreement With Council Of Cooperatives

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences has signed a five-year agreement with the Pennsylvania Council of Cooperatives (PCC) to continue ongoing joint education and research programs.

The pact calls for collaboration between the PCC and Penn State's Cooperative Business Education and Research Program to identify, prioritize and serve the educational needs of the cooperative community.

"Nearly one in three Pennsylvanians is a member of a cooperative or uses cooperative services," says Dr. Robert Steele, dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences. "Helping to sustain healthy cooperative businesses is consistent with Penn State's mission to serve the needs of the state's citizens. This joint program is considered a model for successful industry/university partnerships."

Under the agreement, the Cooperative Business Education and Research Program, which is administered by the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, develops educational programs for cooperative leaders, directors and employees, as well

as for cooperative extension agents and secondary agricultural education teachers. The PCC, a trade organization of more than 25 agricultural and service cooperatives, provides financial support, in addition to business knowledge, expertise and information.

Cornerstones of the joint educational program are the annual Pennsylvania Cooperative Director Institute and the Summer Institute on Cooperative Education and Leadership.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics, Pennsylvania is home to 63 farm cooperatives, 22 rural credit unions, four farm credit associations and 13 rural electric cooperatives.

In 1995, 21 dairy cooperatives served nearly 8,000 members with almost \$1.3 billion in sales; 48 marketing cooperatives served about 12,000 members whose sales totaled nearly \$1.7 billion; seven supply cooperatives with more than 3,300 members generated \$413 million in sales; eight service cooperatives provided \$41 million in services to about 17,000 members; and rural electric cooperatives provided 186,000 members with power valued at \$344 million.

# Dairylea Testifies To Increase Farm Milk Price

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"Between September 1996's record high price and 1997's low price in May, the price declined 30.4 percent," he said. "This is a cheese market-driven price. It is unfortunate that the volatile demand characteristics of the cheese market equally affect Class I prices. With recent changes in the BFP's updater calculation, the price is now much more driven by milk and cheese production in California. Producers in the Northeast are frustrated that cheese production on the West Coast affects Class I prices on the East Coast — even though Class I demand characteristics in the East have no linkage with the cheese demand characteristics out West."

The economic viability of the Garden State's rural economies is affected, in a large measure, by the health and vitality of its dairy farmers, Gallagher stated. As reported by the American Farmland Trust, for every dollar received by farmers from sales of agricultural products, \$3-\$5 are earned by local businesses.

"As much as all this is about low farm prices, it is also about rural economic development. Increases in New Jersey's milk prices will give a shot in the arm to rural economies. As dairy farmers have more money to pay their bills, those dollars reverberate through local economies and get turned over time and again," he said.

"Further decline in rural dollars will result in the loss of a suffi-

cient base of economic activity that will eventually jeopardize the existing agricultural infrastructure. This would impact the feed and machinery dealers, providers of farm inputs and supplies, and veterinarians, among others," remarked Gallagher.

While the price of milk is vitally important to the profitability of the region's dairy farmers, Gallagher explained that Dairylea has intensified its efforts to create programs for members to lower their costs. Dairylea's Agri-Service Agencies provides very affordable health insurance, workers compensation insurance and other coverages to farmers. Additionally, Dairylea members have access to loan and cattle leasing programs. Other businesses include Dairy One, a milk and forage analysis and records keeping venture, designed to bring accurate and timely information to farms, thereby allowing farmers to make sound management decisions. Dairylea's Farm Services Division includes farm input buying programs, as well as an agricultural consulting network. Taken together, these programs can help farmers lower their production costs by 20¢ to 40¢ per hundred-weight.

"Yet, these cost reductions pale in comparison to milk prices that have fallen by \$1.69, in the past year," declared Gallagher, who noted that prices could fall by an additional dollar or more if the Minnesota Milk Producers lawsuit decision stands.

In concluding his testimony, Gallagher reported that Dairylea has taken a leadership role in coordinating efforts with the major dairy cooperatives and other farm organizations in the region to promote emergency price relief and the Northeast Dairy Compact in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

"It is vitally important that these states work together in any efforts aimed at increasing farm milk prices," stressed Gallagher. "We have been writing, meeting, and talking with key officials and legislators to bring about multi-state dialogue to enhance producer pay prices. We believe that a Compact must be put in place for the longer term for those times when the market is inadequately compensating the dairy producers in our region," he said.

"Additionally, Dairylea and other Northeastern dairy cooperatives are attempting to intervene in the Minnesota Case to protect dairy farmer income, immediately," he added.

Other representatives of Dairylea Cooperative have presented similar testimony at hearings conducted by the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board and New York State Senate Agriculture Committee supporting over-order pricing, as well as the expansion of the Northeast Dairy Compact into New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Dairylea Cooperative Inc. is an agricultural service organization. It is cooperatively owned by 2,800 dairy farmers throughout the Northeast, 30 of whom operate in New Jersey. Dairylea markets nearly 5 billion pounds of milk annually, and participates, and is invested, in a milk marketing network stretching from Maine to Ohio.

# MILK AMERICA'S HEALTH KICK

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Mon., Jan. 5, 1998 @ 10:00 A.M.

(Inspect from 8:30 A.M. Auction Day)

(Blizzard Date: Tues., Jan. 6 @ 10:00 A.M.)

for Mr. Homer Schultz

Located at 6993 Phillips Mill Rd.

New Hope, Solebury Twp., Bucks Co., PA

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