

# Statewide AI Biosecurity Regulations Not Needed

(Continued from Page A21)

That's the way he'd like to see it continue, he said.

According to Smith, being able to minimize the use of specific regulations in dealing with such disease problems is desired on the part of government and industry.

The 1996-created Domestic Animal Law, created through the efforts of former state Secretary of Agriculture Charles Brosius working with the state Legislature, gave considerable strength to the state Department of Agriculture to protect public health and the health of the state's domestic animals.

The authority to set specific quarantine conditions on a case-by-case basis has been determined to be a far superior method of dealing and reacting to contagious disease outbreaks than attempting to stranglehold the industry through a set of overly restrictive, slow-to-change regulations.

Further, the PDA has the authority over all animals kept in captivity, not just the traditional farm

animals.

They should also understand that the virus is microscopic, and can be carried on microscopic materials, mainly organic.

For practical use, they did say that it appears to remain mostly active in manure, and in the birds. Maintaining control of those two physical things by preventing contamination of fields, vehicles, and clothes, and taking precautions to not be careless in any aspect of control, is urged.

Disciplined rodent control and wild bird control is also strongly urged, not only to thwart the introduction of avian influenza, but to prevent any variety of diseases from infecting a flock.

It was recommended that, since waterfowl carry the disease, those raising poultry should not encourage or allow waterfowl near facilities or in farm ponds.

Farm ponds that waterfowl may be able to access should not be used as a water source for poultry.

PDA can require identification of animals, record keeping, the keeping and handling, the safety of domestic animal feed, requirements for interstate and intrastate movement of animals, and to monitor for the presence of transmissible disease.

The department also has the authority to enter and inspect any property or stop any vehicle suspected of carrying animals exposed to infectious disease or contaminated by a hazardous substance.

Smith said this last authority, to enter and search, is one that carries the most concern among citizens. However, he said it is only to be used if there is good reason.

While criminal penalties are not extensive for those who violate the Domestic Animal Law, the civil penalties allowed actually provides the PDA with greater flexibility in solving a problem situation.

It has the discretion to assess and collect a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 per violation.

Unlike a criminal violation, there is less burden of proof required to impose a civil penalty. He said those familiar with the criminal and civil trials of O.J. Simpson should be able to discern the difference in burden of proof requirements between criminal and civil cases.

"If reasonable minds can agree, then you don't have to use (the full authorities granted the PDA), but they are good to have," he said.

He said another complaint is that while there doesn't appear to a shortage of manpower by the state during the initial discovery of a disease outbreak, there are too few field inspectors for day-to-day enforcement.

It can be expected that those who wish to move questionable birds or do something illegally know what time regulatory field crews quit for the day.

It has been recommended, "If you can be everywhere all the time, just be everywhere some of the time," he said.

Schmucker said that the flexibility allowed the department in its authority granted by the Domestic Animal Law is its success.

He said it seems more appropriate to have the role of the department be more to provide education and promoting biosecurity measures than attempting to enforce rigid rules.

The flexibility also allows the ability to adjust strategies in battling any disease. "We're dealing with a moving target," he said.

Further, the state has the strength of two methods for discovery of poultry disease — through mandatory reporting provisions that require producer and veterinarian to report possession of animals that knowingly died of dangerous transmissible disease, or suspected of having it.

Further, through a regular system of surveillance (blood testing and health certification), the state's birds are also monitored for disease.

In other discussions, it was recommended that all poultry producers should keep accurate records and adopt and strictly follow biosecurity measures.

## Dairy Compact's Senate Passage Earns Farm Bureau Approval

GLENMONT, N.Y. — New York Farm Bureau is very pleased with the State Senate's recent passage of the dairy compact bill, and thanks the bill's sponsors for understanding and supporting the needs of the state's dairy farmers.

"The dairy compact bill was passed in large part because the Senate sponsors understand the needs of our dairy farmers," New York Farm Bureau President John Lincoln said. "I would especially like to thank Senator Randy Kuhl and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno for their leadership in not only getting this bill to the floor of the State Senate, but getting it passed. They made this happen, and we appreciate it."

In addition to Senator Kuhl, President Lincoln had praise for the bill's cosponsors, including Senators Charles D. Cook, John

DeFranciso, Hugh T. Farley, Carl Marcellino, John J. Marchi, Stephen M. Saland, James L. Seward, Dale M. Volker and James M. Wright.

"At the same time, it was heartening to see Senate Democrats support this very important legislation," Lincoln added. He specifically cited Senators Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann, Ada L. Smith and Alton R. Waldon, Jr. for their support of New York agriculture.

"We appreciate the fact that they are working to help the dairy farmers of this state," President Lincoln added. "The dairy farms of this state provide fresh, wholesome milk for the millions of residents of New York State. They need the compact, and these senators rose above the rhetoric and supported this legislation."

Lincoln added that Farm

Bureau has high hopes that the State Assembly also will approve the dairy compact bill so it can be signed into law by Governor George Pataki.

## Banquet Set

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co) — The Board of directors of the Lancaster County Conservation District wishes to invite the general public to its 47th annual dinner meeting on Thursday evening, March 19, at 6.30 P.M. at the Country table Restaurant, Mount Joy

The program will consist of the Garden Spot Vocal Ensemble from Eastern Lancaster County School District, followed by the presentation of various awards

Tickets are \$13.50 each and can be purchased from the district office by calling (717) 299-5361

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