

## Sen. Santorum Receives Farm Bureau Award

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While Washington, D.C. may seem acres away from the family farm, some Mifflin County farmers were lucky enough to personally meet one of their main agricultural influences in the U.S. Legislature.

U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum stopped recently at the Lewistown farm of Marlin, Manila, and Mark Ellinger to accept the Friend of the Farm Bureau Award from the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

Santorum serves on the Senate Agriculture Committee while Mark Ellinger is Mifflin County Farm Bureau president.

Joel Rotz, director of National Legislative Programs with the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, presented the award.

"Farm Bureau recognizes those members of Congress who have demonstrated a high level of support for key issues of importance to Farm Bureau. Sen. Santorum has been a strong supporter of necessary funding for agricultural research and crop insurance programs," Rotz said. "Without proper funding for agricultural research to keep our nation's agriculture competitive and on the cutting edge, and government programs that help farmers manage their risks, we will not continue to be the world leader we are today."

Santorum, a Republican from

Pittsburgh, said he knew little about agriculture.

"When I got to the Senate, I decided the best way to learn about an issue is to get on a committee where you're forced to learn about it."

According to Rotz, Santorum has supported "fiscal responsibility through a balanced budget along with significant tax cuts that include reductions in the capital gains tax, 100 percent health insurance deductions for the self-employed, and higher exemptions from estate taxes. These tax cuts provide relief to America's farmers as well as other small businesses that make up the backbone of our national economy. It's tax relief like this that will help spur more investment in farming operations and improve opportunities for future generations to continue family farm operations."

Santorum and seven United States representatives, including Rep. Bud Shuster, received the awards. The awards, presented every congressional session, are based on four or five farmer-friendly votes on national issues.

After the awards presentation, Santorum said, "It's nice to be in front of a group of farmers and not have anyone comment on milk prices." He then laughed as one farmer said that that was his first question on the list.

Santorum fielded questions about the Food Quality Protection Act and the use of pesticides. Santorum said he doesn't understand



Pennsylvania Farm Bureau presents a Friend of the Farm Bureau Award to U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum at the Lewistown farm of Mark Ellinger. From the left are political candidate Jake Corman, Mark Ellinger who is owner of the farm and president of the county Farm Bureau, Sen. Rick Santorum, and Joel Rotz, PFB director of national legislative programs.

the movement which advocates the use of little or no pesticides. Food production in the United States would decrease and more land, such as in the rain forests, would be cleared to grow more food.

Santorum spent about one hour at the farm.

The Ellingers farm 165 acres of corn, hay, and soybeans on a farm that's been in the family since 1955.

Mark said he has had an interest

in politics since joining the organization 20 years ago. He has served as governmental relations director and on the local State Senate Legislative Committee and the National Legislative Committee. He is also a Granville Township director.



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**Dairyman To Dairyman**

**GEORGE CUDOC**

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**QUESTION:** At harvest time we had the opportunity to buy wheat at an unheard of low price. My vet and feed person both said wheat would be a good way to stretch my high moisture corn that usually runs out before next year's harvest. We made the transition over a two-week period and yet our cows dropped in production immediately and have yet to come back to where they were before the change. I know that corn harvest is almost here, but should I bother to plant wheat this year, as I had planned? My milk drop resulted in almost \$4,000 less milk sold over the wheat-feeding period. This cheap wheat doesn't seem so cheap to me now.

**ANSWER:** Wheat used in dairy cattle should be a very available source of energy, mostly as a starch carbohydrate.

What took place at this farm can

lead to a lot of frustration, not only for the dairyman who lost the chance to make cheaper milk due to smart purchasing of a good feed, but also for his feed advisors who feel a bit responsible for the lack of success in attaining the goal of cutting costs without sacrificing production.

Assigning or assuming blame in most cases accomplishes nothing, but the chance to avoid such failures in the future can be of real benefit.

To solve this mystery of less than desirable performance, we have some very good tools to work with, both on a chemical and physical level.

Looking at some physical properties of the cow, we can shed some light on what has probably happened here.

At some point in problem solving, we need to stand back and look at what is too easy, too simple, and even too absurd to consider.

Manure is the answer! You have to make light about a subject like manure.

Seriously, the knowledge that we can gain by making a habit of studying the manure of our cows can go a long way in avoiding problems such as milk production losses when we make feeding changes.

### Average Farm Feed Costs For Handy Reference

To help farmers across the state to have handy reference of commodity input costs in their feeding operations for DHIA record sheets or to develop livestock feed cost data, here's last week's average costs of various ingredients as compiled from regional reports across the state of Pennsylvania.

Remember, these are averages,

so you will need to adjust your figures up or down according to your location and the quality of your crop.

Corn, No.2y — 2.19 bu., 3.98 cwt.  
Wheat, No. 2 — 2.37 bu., 3.96 cwt.  
Barley, No. 3 — 1.33 bu., 2.85 cwt.  
Oats, No. 2 — 1.32 bu., 4.12 cwt.  
Soybeans, No. 1 — 4.84 bu., 8.08 cwt.

The first clue that something was going wrong was that, when the wheat was fed, bits and pieces of wheat came through in the manure. This unused portion of feed that the cow was supposed to utilize as energy was only fertilizing the fields that it was spread upon.

Grains used for carbohydrates in a cow's diet must be made available to her. You can accomplish this by processing all grains physically, chemically, or a combination of the two.

Seed grains, like wheat and corn, have a protective shell around them that can inhibit microbial breakdown in the rumen and pass undigested out into manure.

Grind these types of grains fine to get the most from them.

In the high-producing cow, we must allow her every opportunity to digest her diet quickly because of the large amount of feed that moves in and out of her digestive system at a rapid rate, daily.

Chemically altered grain — like high moisture, steam flaked, and soda treated — has already made these grains a step or two closer to being digested, and therefore in less need of physical preparation.

The next tool that this farm had at its disposal is a little more sophisticated than scoring manure, and, when used extensively, can provide monthly feedback data about how we can best balance and

deliver diets to our cows.

Milk component analysis provides us with vital information concerning the nutrient needs of the dairy cow. MUN, which is used on about 33 percent of the Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association member farms, is the one component that has the best potential in solving the type of problem in today's question.

Research and database studies have coupled MUN output with protein utilization in the diet of the dairy cow. The diet in this particular herd maintained the same percent of crude protein (CP), percent UIP, percent DIP, percent non-structural carbohydrate (NSC), and percent dry matter (DM), even though wheat was being utilized in replacement of some high moisture corn.

The herd remained reasonably constant at 13.7 MUN from the first of the year on, with a slight climb in May to 15.1.

Within three weeks of making the change to include wheat in the diet, the MUN rose to 18.4.

Protein totals and portions remained the same, but the NSC portion available to the cow dropped.

The diet was balanced for the same level of percent NSC, but what the cow could actually use was altered.

With MUN analysis done on a monthly basis, we can quickly make changes to the diet makeup,

diet delivery, or a combination of the two. The cows tell us what is going on by component evaluation.

We can then better predict the outcome of feeding management changes that we all will suffer through at one time or another. What we can measure we can manage, and what we manage we hope to control.

This is a typical way in which we can combine good tools that we have at our disposal.

The best tool is the good "cow sense" that many dairymen use on a day-to-day basis.

Developing such techniques, such as manure scoring, and adding that to what we already know will encourage looking for the problem with a different perspective.

MUN testing and analysis is a perfect fit to take that cow sense and knowledge to the next level.

This is what today's dairying is all about, regardless of size or scale.

The last thing I asked this dairyman, who also happens to be a friend of mine, was why he didn't ask someone about the big MUN change sooner. His answer was that he didn't want to sound stupid. That's the only part of the whole situation that seems near stupid to me.

Looking forward to questions from you.