

Tobacco Marketing Cooperative Asks Farmers To Join Now

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Association will attempt to attract the southern tobacco buyers for Type 609 cigarette tobacco to the county by holding auctions, hopefully beginning after the start of the new year.

Jane Balmer, a Mt. Joy tobacco farmer who is voluntarily spearheading the effort, said they want to have as many of the 1,100 tobacco farmers as members as possible. Those who support the effort need to get their membership returned before December 1, so that the committee can know how many farmers wish to be part of the effort and how many of the 20 million pounds of tobacco grown each year they will have for sale.

"The committee will decide shortly after December 1 if we have enough cooperation to move forward with the effort," Balmer said. "How many of the farms or what part of the total poundage we need to be effective is the tough question. We are hoping for 70 percent but may be able to make it work with 60 percent. But if farmers want to see some effort put forth, they need to get their membership to us now.

"The question is raised, 'What if it doesn't work?' Balmer said. "But I tell farmers we have nothing to lose. We have no market now, and if we can't get it to work, we will return a good part of the \$50 membership fee back to the farmer. We will need to hire a lawyer to make sure the cooperative is legal in Pennsylvania, but I work cheap, for nothing. So what do you have to lose? Maybe \$10 or \$15. And we wouldn't be in any different situation than we are now. But suppose it does work? United we stand, divided we keep on rolling down hill."

In talking to buyers, local farmers have some favorable verbal indications these buyers think the cooperative marketing effort is a good move. But because of the ongoing litigation against the tobacco companies, they have been advised by their lawyers to not discuss marketing to anyone.

Not only does the loss of the tobacco market put hardship on individual farmers, the supporting agri-businesses feel the lost revenue as well. Tobacco money pays off production loans, farm mortgages, and equipment and service purchases.

About 25 percent of the county's tobacco is Type 41, used in cigars and chewing tobacco. Lancaster Leaf, a local company, usually buys the bulk of this crop so there is less pressure to find buyers. The committee hasn't decided if Type 41 will also be marketed through a cooperative. Balmer tells the farmers to list separately the number of pounds of each type they have for sale.

If a majority of the county's tobacco farmers support the effort, committee members expect the cooperative to be up and running in a few weeks. Members will elect a nine-member board of directors. If there is not enough support, the cooperative will dissolve and those who paid a membership fee will receive a partial refund.

An agreement form is printed with this story. Balmer said farmers who wish to support the effort may cut the form from the newspaper, fill out the necessary information, and mail it with their \$50 fee to the Lancaster County agent's

office. The address is: Penn State Cooperative Extension, % Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, 1381 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA 17601. For more information you may call Anderson at (717) 394-6851.

Additional meetings were scheduled for Thursday night at the Terre Hill Community Building and the Kirkwood Auction Barn.

The meeting held Thursday night at the Terre Hill Community Building attracted 110 farmers. Balmer was pleased with the number who came. An additional meeting in the series was scheduled for Friday night at the Kirkwood Auction Barn after our press deadline.

DAUPHIN (Dauphin Co.) — Penn State Cooperative Extension in Dauphin County is offering two agronomy workshops on Wednesday, Dec. 9, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Elizabethtown Public Library.

The morning workshop is "Crop Rotations That Make Sense (and Money) on Dairy Farms." This workshop explores the application and benefits of different crop rotations on Pennsylvania dairy farms.

A video will be shown that features five Pennsylvania producers sharing their experiences with crop rotations on their farms. The producers will discuss short a corn and alfalfa rotation; incorporation of soybeans and rye, or barley, into a

corn/alfalfa rotation; three-year alfalfa and two-year corn rotations; and short growing season rotations.

The afternoon workshop is "Using the Agronomy Guide to Make Crop Management Decisions." Over the years the Penn State Agronomy Guide has become the standard reference for crop production in Pennsylvania. The workshop will provide an overview of the Guide and how to use it to make crop management decisions regarding weed control, fertilizer recommendations, nutrient management, variety selections, and budgets. Those registering for this workshop should bring a recent edition of the Agronomy Guide to the workshop.

Participants can purchase the new 1999-2000 Penn State Agronomy Guide at the Dauphin County Extension office.

Participants can attend one or both workshops. Cost is \$5 for each workshop. Lunch is on your own. Registration forms are available by contacting the Dauphin County Cooperative Extension office (717) 921-8803 during regular business hours from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Registration deadline is Friday, Dec. 4.

got milk?

Pennsylvania Tobacco Marketing Association Agreement

Section 1. Purpose. The undersigned, a producer of agricultural products, hereinafter referred to as "Producer," together with other signers of agreements similar hereto, propose to organize a cooperative association under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the purpose of marketing tobacco.

Section 2. Organization Committee. The Association shall be organized with suitable articles of incorporation and bylaws as determined by an organizational committee consisting of the following persons:

Name	Name	Name
1. Jane Balmer	5. David S. Esh	9. Aaron Lantz
2. Vernon Balmer	6. Henry S. Esh	10. Lawrence Martin
3. Daniel S. Dicmer, Jr.	7. Benual Fisher	11. David Riehl, Jr.
4. Victor Dohner	8. Daniel S. King	12. Daniel B. Zook

This committee may, by vote of a majority of its members, increase its membership, fill any vacancy therein, and appoint any subcommittees deemed necessary to conduct its affairs. The committee may incur necessary obligations, make necessary expenditures, and take any such action as may, in its discretion, be deemed advisable to further the organization of the association.

Section 3. Patronage Commitment. Producer agrees to sign a marketing agreement to commit all the type 609 → Type 41 tobacco produced by Producer, on land owned or leased by Producer, to the association for direct marketing, processing, or other disposition as the association sees fit.

Producer estimates such production will total _____ (pounds) in 1998.

If member wishes to terminate his membership in the Association, member must provide Association with written request by October 1.

Section 4. Financial Commitment. Producer agrees to pay a membership fee of \$ 50.00, payable when this agreement is signed and accepted by the Association. Once a farmer signs this membership agreement and the association is activated, member must pay association commissions even though he may sell to an off-farm buyer.

Section 5. Calling of Membership Meeting. If, on or before December 1, 1998, the organization committee is of the opinion that sufficient sign up has been obtained to enable the Association to operate efficiently, the committee shall set a time and place for a meeting of those persons who have signed this agreement to determine, by majority vote, whether to proceed with the formation and operation of the association, and to consider such other business as may be deemed appropriate.

Not less than ten days before the meeting, notice of the time and place of the meeting shall be sent to all signers by first-class mail, and an appropriate notice shall be published in one or more newspapers of general circulation in the area in which those who signed agreements like this one reside.

Section 6. Accounting. The organization committee shall keep detailed, accurate accounts of all receipts and of all expenditures of every kind. It shall have such accounts audited and render a written report thereof to the board of directors of the association when organized. And it shall thereupon turn over to the association any balance remaining in its hands free of obligation. If the Association is not organized, such unexpended balance shall be prorated among, and returned to, those who contributed to the organization fund. This is a non-profit Association.

Date _____, 1998

Producer's Name _____ Address _____

Telephone number _____ Social security number or Tax I.D. Number _____

Producer's Signature _____ For Association Signature _____

Date Paid: _____; Paid By: _____ Cash _____ Check; Received By: _____