

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Continues To Grow

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membership.

He said that all six of the regions into which PFB divides state membership reached goals.

New membership hit a record with 3,820 joining, setting a record.

While 70 percent of the new membership was attributed to individuals joining to take advantage of discounted services, such as health insurance, and liability insurances through Nationwide with which PFB has a cooperative relationship, Donaldson said the organization is what it is today because of members contacting other individuals.

He said that, as of Tuesday, the PFB was 18 members shy of having 20,000 members with dues paid for 1999.

He said the organization's goal of 30,000 members by the year 2000 is achievable. All they need is about 4,000 more members.

"We need to keep working to make this happen," Donaldson said.

The all-time high membership for Farm Bureau was 26,665, several years ago.

Donaldson said that, for him, the PFB has come of age as an organization representing the grassroots majority consensus among practicing agricultural business owners and entrepreneurs.

He said that fact was made clear in the spring, when the state Legislature formerly recognized the Farm Bureau's works and representation of the agricultural community.

Further, he said the strength of Farm Bureau is reinforced in that

the American Farm Bureau, of which the PFB is an affiliate, has been rated the 17th most influential lobbying group in Washington D.C.

To illustrate some of the effectiveness of the whole Farm Bureau organization — from kitchen table meetings, to county groups, to state and national —

Donaldson said members should consider that Farm Bureau was responsible for helping to gain a change in federal tax regulations for this year that allows income averaging, lower capital gains taxes, and other reductions.

The income averaging, he explained, allows paying taxes from one good year spread out over three years.

Also, he said that farmers will be eligible for a 100-percent tax deduction on health care costs. "The higher tax exemptions go a long way to keeping the family farm in the family," Donaldson said.

He said there were some disappointments, such as in not yet achieving a program called Farmers and Ranchers Risk Management Accounts.

That program, he explained, would allow farmers to "salt away" income from one year and claim it during a later year (over a five-year period) and pay taxes on it at the later date.

He also said that while Pennsylvania's first effort at local tax reform applies only to school districts and school boards, and is voluntary, and if it is to be used, it needs members of the community to meet with school district boards, as well as others involved with the



The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau selects the winner of its Young Farmers and Ranchers program. From the left are program chairman Brian Dietrich, winners Donald and Joanne Stoltzfus, George Roberts representing award sponsor Dodge Truck, and PFB Vice President Carl Shaffer.

school board and community and civic issues, to develop relationships and awareness, and coalitions.

A major problem facing agriculture is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's interpretation of the intent of the Food Quality Protection Act, which replaced the zero-tolerance Delaney Clause, according to Donaldson.

With the dramatic precision of testing that has been developed in the years since the Delaney Clause was established, the ability to test products far exceeds the precision required to determine levels of consequence to human safety.

However, the Delaney Clause didn't address the significance of any results of testing, just that testing show zero results. (Compared to today's testing, it has been widely reported that a lot of testing available when the Delaney Clause was created would show "zero," while today's tests would indicate some level.)

With the precision testing technology currently possible, it has been successfully argued and understood by the U.S. Congress that the Delaney Clause was an unrealistic ideal of purity of natural substances.

In response, the U.S. Congress and the president made the Food Quality Protection Act, with the understanding that risk-assessment would be included.

According to Donaldson, the FQPA was passed with the understanding by Farm Bureau and Congress that currently used chemicals would stay on the shelf.

He said that in following up the new Act, the EPA wrote the regulations promulgating the Act, twisting it into a potential nightmare for production agriculture in the United States.

The first sign of trouble, he said, was the EPA's threatened ban of organophosphates, a widely used family of pesticides for which there is no substitute.

He said that EPA people are not using sound science to determine scientifically-sound allowable levels, and are in essence turning the new act into a repeat of the Delaney Clause.

According to Donaldson, if there is a risk to health that exists, beyond a reasonable risk, the farming community would be ready and willing to accept the loss of such a widespread chemical.

But the fact is the EPA is not using sound science to determine levels, and that fact threatens the ability of American agriculture to survive increasing agricultural



From the left, Discussion Meet winner Mark Warnshuis receives a \$500 prize from George Roberts of Dodge Truck, while Brian Dietrich, committee chairman, helps with the presentation.



From the left, Guy Donaldson, president of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, presents the organization's Distinguished Service Award to past PFB president Keith Eckel.



From the left, Guy Donaldson, president of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, presents an appreciation award to Paul Morgan of Firestone Tire Company, for its outstanding support of the Pennsylvania Friends of Agriculture Foundation.



From the left, Guy Donaldson, president of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, presents the organization's All-Star Award to Arland Schantz, representing the winning Lehigh County Farm Bureau.

imports not produced under the same set of controls and testing as would be imposed only on American agriculture by the current EPA.

Donaldson said the Vice President Al Gore did issue a memorandum directing the EPA to not eliminate any family of pesticides until receiving adequate input from the agricultural, chemical and other concerned industries.

Therefore, for 1998 there was no banning action against organophosphates, but that doesn't mean the battle to establish and follow reason and good science-based policies is over.

"This thing (FQPA) does not cover just fruit and vegetables," Donaldson said, who with his family operates a 550-acre orchard and vegetable farm and direct market in Orrtana. "It affects all of agriculture across the nation. Every

sector needs to contact their legislator and urge them to write EPA, and say they need to interpret (the FQPA) using good sound science-based information..." as Congress had intended.

"They also need to speed up registration of new products," Donaldson said, so that replacement products can be available should any family of products or specific product be proposed for elimination.

As an example of the discrepancy between EPA and real life, Donaldson said that on his farm he uses about 50 percent of label recommendations of certain chemicals.

But in making its decisions, the EPA hasn't been concerned with actual uses, but interprets actual use from label recommendations.

He said that Farm Bureau members need to call the American (Continued from Page A29)