

# Lancaster Farming

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## Pa. Pork Council Proposes National Moratorium To Suspend Sow House Construction

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)  
— Next Friday, March 5, a delegation of Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council (PPPC) representa-

tives will submit a resolution to the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) that, in effect, asks the USDA to order a suspension on construction of all new sow houses across the country.

According to PPPC President David Reinecker, a swine producer from York Springs, the resolution is a way of taking a "time out," he said, from what the industry identifies as an oversupply of

hogs, which has sent the nationwide price of hogs plummeting to their lowest ever.

The resolution, proposed by the Lancaster Pork Producers Council, was passed at the PPPC's board meeting Feb. 18. The resolution calls for a one-year moratorium on the construction of new sow units.

Brent Hershey, president of the Lancaster Pork Producers Council, helped sponsor and voted for the resolution, which passed by a narrow margin. Of 19 present at the meeting, 10 voted for, nine against, the resolution.

The proposal, according to Hershey, passed because the industry is reeling from the lowest prices for hogs in the history of the country, he noted.

"Industry experts tell us there are more hogs than the capacity to kill the hogs," Hershey, president of Hershey Ag, Marietta, explained.

In addition, the U.S. government has made monies available to producers to help them ride out the current depressed prices.

About \$80 million per year is coming from the government to take herds that are pseudorabies positive and render them. The meats are still usable, Hershey noted, but because of the flood of pork on the market, the meat is rendered.

"The supply and demand system

is completely out of sync," Hershey said.

If the resolution, one of many put forward by representatives of 50 states at the National Pork Forum next week at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tenn., a question arises: how will the moratorium be enforced?

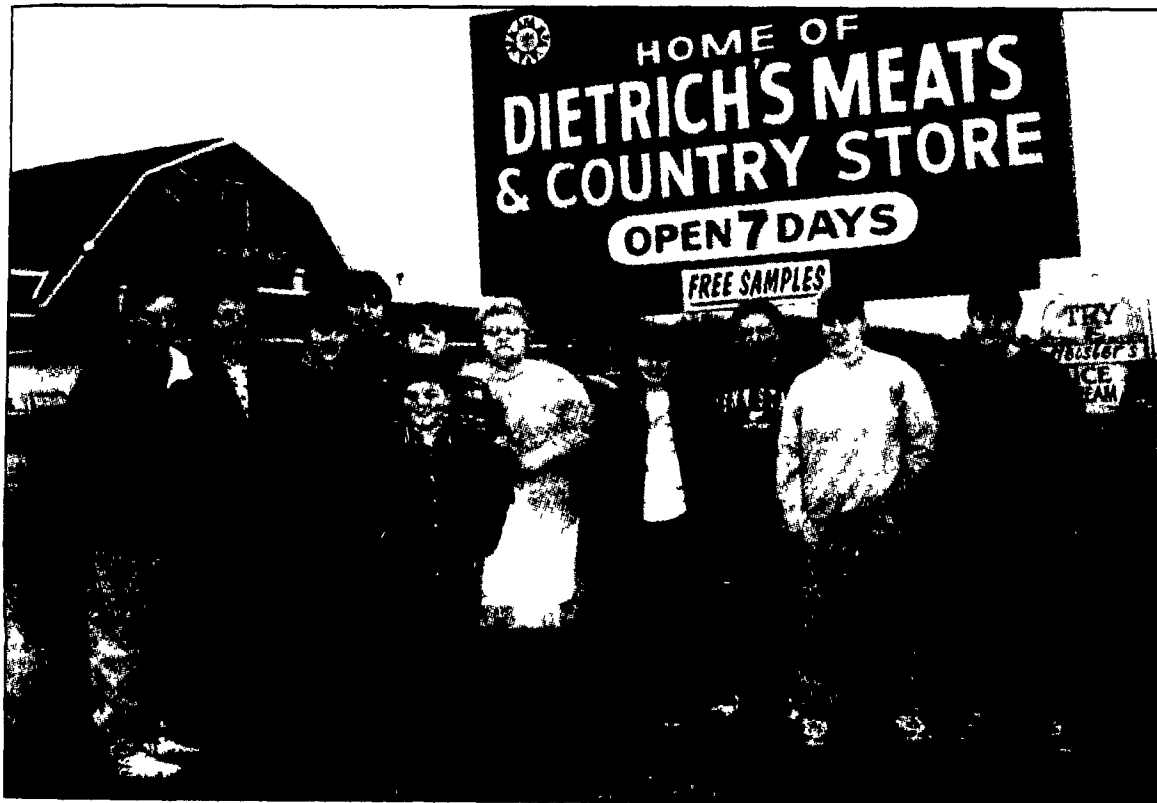
According to PPPC President David Reinecker, the resolution asks U.S. Ag Secretary Dan Glickman to find a way to enforce it, but defines no clear way for him to do so.

The purpose of the resolution is to ask for a "time out," Reinecker said. "In one year, we have increased the supply of pork nationwide by 10 percent. No industry can grow when the commodity increases by that number of percent."

Reinecker noted that the resolution is pointed only at sow operations. It does not include new sow units that have been approved for construction or for which construction is already under way. It doesn't have anything to do with the construction of new weaning or finishing units.

The PPPC requested that Penn State Extension work to draw up the one-page resolution. The resolution was written by Bob Mikesell, senior extension associate, and Ken Kephart, Penn State swine specialist.

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This three-generational family runs a farm, butcher shop, bakery, and market to provide customers with meat fresh from the farm. In addition to fresh cuts, Dietrich's Country Meats, Krumsville, Berks County, makes more than 60 varieties of processed products such as kielbasa, beef sticks, beef jerky, dried beef, Mettwurst, Jagdwurst, and other Pennsylvania Dutch and ethnic foods. Read more about the Dietrichs on page B6. Photo by Lou Ann Good.

## Pennsylvania's Dairy Producers Divided Over Compact

**VERNON ACHENBACH JR.**  
Lancaster Farming Staff

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — The dairy industry in Pennsylvania is unequally divided over the need to join the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact, according to testimony presented Tuesday during a hearing in the state Capitol.

The state House Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee held a hearing Tuesday on proposed legislation that would enable Pennsylvania to join the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact should the United States Congress authorize it prior to Oct. 1, 1999.

While no one testified to any problem with the actual wording of House Bill 170, which was the main issue before the Committee, the hearing exceeded its scheduled time because of discussions and opinions presented as to the effects, need, and wisdom of pursuing expansion of the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact and including Pennsylvania.

### Pro-Compact

Representatives of the state's largest and most influential agricultural policy organizations —

the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and the Pennsylvania State Grange — testified in support of joining the Compact.

Those organizations develop policy annually through local membership initiative and delegate voting, frequently referred to as a grassroots mechanism of policy development.

Arden Tewksbury, of Meshoppen, founder and president of the much smaller membership Pro-Ag organization, has been a known supporter of Pennsylvania joining the Compact. He said he already ships milk into the existing Compact states.

Robert Junk, president of the Pennsylvania Farmers Union, testified in support of joining the Compact.

Those two organizations have policy developed by leadership.

Representatives for two of the nation's largest dairy cooperatives — Land O' Lakes, and Dairy Farmers of America — said the cooperatives strongly support Pennsylvania joining the Compact.

Allen O'Hara, representing the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association

Inc., said the cooperative strongly encourages Pennsylvania joining the Compact. According to published reports, about half of the

Md.-Va. Milk Producers membership is in Pennsylvania. Also, the Md.-Va. cooperative has announced it is entering into a mer-

ger with the 400-member Carolina Virginia Milk Producers Association with members to Georgia.

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The 1999 Pennsylvania Holstein Hall of Fame inductee is Lewis Berkley, Berlin, Somerset County. The honor was given at the Pennsylvania Holstein Association's annual meeting in Wilkes-Barre last week. In the photo, from left are, Michelle Romesburg, Berkley, Barbara Berkley, Gina Berkley, and Jess Parks. See Story page A22.