

# York County Conservation District Attends State Conservation Event

CHAMPION (Allegheny Co.) — The 52nd Joint Annual Conference for the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) and the State Conservation Commission (SCC) was conducted from Nov

7-10 at the Seven Springs Mountain Resort in Champion. Chairman Keith Eisenhart and Director Pat Sueck, representing the York County Conservation District, attended the joint annual conference as

well as representatives from PACD, the State Conservation Commission (SCC), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The purpose of the joint annual conference was to provide the county conservation district leaders and supporters an opportunity to strengthen their network and learn about new and emerging conservation issues.

The theme of this year's conference was "Conservation Partnerships." John C. Oliver, secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, delivered the keynote address and Samuel E. Hayes, secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, spoke on the importance of current and future partnerships in Pennsylvania. In addition to workshops on leadership development and general sessions, the state association conducted committee meetings and annual business activities, including the adoption of policies and election of officers. PACD elected the following officers to the PACD board of directors: Frank Long (Blair CD), president, Ron Rohall

(Westmoreland CD), first vice president, Jarrett Miller (Erie CD), second vice president, Phyllis Hoople, (Crawford CD), secretary, Keith Eisenhart, (York CD), Treasurer, and Patricia Sueck (York CD), NACD director.

Newly elected president Frank Long is looking forward to serving the PACD. "The PACD offers many services to its members and I look forward to expanding these services to contribute to a prosperous future for conservation districts."

Seven regional directors also serve PACD; Harry Stokes (Adams CD), Phyllis Hoople (Crawford CD), Bill Slosky (Washington CD), Karen Hovey (Union CD), Victor Cappucci (Wyoming CD), Harold Kulp (Chester CD), and Clair Dumm (Cambria CD).

A new feature of this year's conference was the first annual Conservation Expo, which hosted more than forty exhibitors and demonstrators from around the state who assisted or supported conservation efforts. The Expo facilitated the sharing of resources, introduced new products, and provided networking opportunities to lead Pennsylvania's conservation efforts into the 21st century.

The York County Conservation District received PACD's "Annual Report of the Year" for its 1998 annual report. Kari Umphrey, former education/communications coordinator, coordinated the conservation district's 1998 annual report. The Izaak Walton League, York Chapter #67, was awarded "Best Non-Commercial Exhibit" by PACD.

## Glickman Backs Closer Oversight Of Research, Promotion Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman recently endorsed all the recommendations of a USDA task force calling for enhanced oversight of agricultural commodity research and promotion programs.

"These steps will help assure American farmers, ranchers, and consumers that their money is being spent wisely," said Glickman. "Research and promotion programs can help our farmers and ranchers remain competitive in domestic and international marketplaces. USDA's job is to ensure that these programs, funded entirely by agricultural producers, not taxpayers, remain fiscally sound and fully accountable."

The task force, which Glickman formed in November 1998, reviewed operations and oversight of the boards, focusing on issues that have created dissent within some of the industry groups or have been the target of public concern.

Secretary Glickman said he will work to enact all 21 of the task force's specific recommendations. Many of the recommendations will be included in a new set of oversight guidelines in the Federal Register on Friday, Dec. 17 and open to public comment for 90 days. Other recommendations will require legislative action.

The recommendations include:

- Require a super majority to establish new programs.
- Hold mandatory continuance referendum for each program at least once every five years.
- Require the participation of at least one public or consumer voting member on each board.
- Strongly encourage boards to consider diversity as a factor in nominations.
- Require boards to use Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards.
- Require boards to use competitive bidding whenever possible.
- Require boards to draft written policies, subject to USDA approval, regarding travel and expense reimbursement.

• Place greater emphasis on training and orientation for board members, particularly regarding the misuse of board funds to influence government legislation or policy and conflicts of interest.

"We believe our recommendations will make a positive difference in the operations of research and promotion boards and will strengthen USDA's responsibility for oversight," said Michael V. Dunn, undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs and chair of the task force. "We invite the public to scrutinize these guidelines and provide their best advice on how to move forward on these issues."

The task force's full report can be found at [www.ams.usda.gov/t&p/rpfinal.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/t&p/rpfinal.htm).

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