

State Farm Leader Calls On Congress To Help Farm Economy

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The head of a statewide farm organization called on members of Congress to take action on some "tough issues facing agriculture."

Guy Donaldson, president of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, addressed Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation at a breakfast meeting at the Rayburn House Office Building attended by about 200 Farm Bureau members.

The breakfast meeting was part of PFB's annual Washington Legislative Tour. Farmers from PFB's 54 county farm bureaus had visited with their congressmen and U.S. senators the day before to recommend action on issues facing agriculture.

Dairymen in Pennsylvania are in desperate shape, Donaldson told the breakfast gathering. "They are receiving the lowest price for their milk since the 1970s, which means many dairymen are not even meeting their production costs."

Donaldson called for expansion and extension of the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact, which has operated in six New England states since 1997.

"H.R. 1604 and S.J. Resolution 22 accomplish that goal and include Pennsylvania dairymen in the compact," Donaldson said. "Expanding and extending the compact would provide an income safety net and stable prices to dairymen. This economically distressed industry needs this legislation to help itself."

Farm Bureau also supports H.R. 1535 to extend the milk price support program for an additional two years. If the milk price support program is allowed to expire at the end of this year, it will be another devastating economic setback for the dairy industry, Donaldson said.

"Agriculture's future success will depend heavily on its ability to sell its products through the international marketplace. It's time to release the shackles that

keep in force antiquated trade policies," Donaldson told legislators.

"First, we need to grant normal trade relations status to China on a permanent basis... not this year-to-year evaluation. China has agreed to take significant steps in opening its markets to agricultural trade. They agreed to eliminate subsidies of their farm exports and reduce import tariffs by an average of 50 percent. It's time that we are given access to one of the most important growth markets in the world by granting China normal trade relations," Donaldson said.

He also urged Congress to lift unilateral trade sanctions against other countries. In the past five years, 61 such trade sanctions were imposed on 35 countries. "Right now, U.S. agricultural producers are prohibited from exporting their products to six different countries," Donaldson said. "It's time to take agricultural food and fiber out of the equation in our effort to implement political punishment."

Farmers need some innovative ways to meet the economic challenges it faces, Donaldson said. "One of the most ingenious

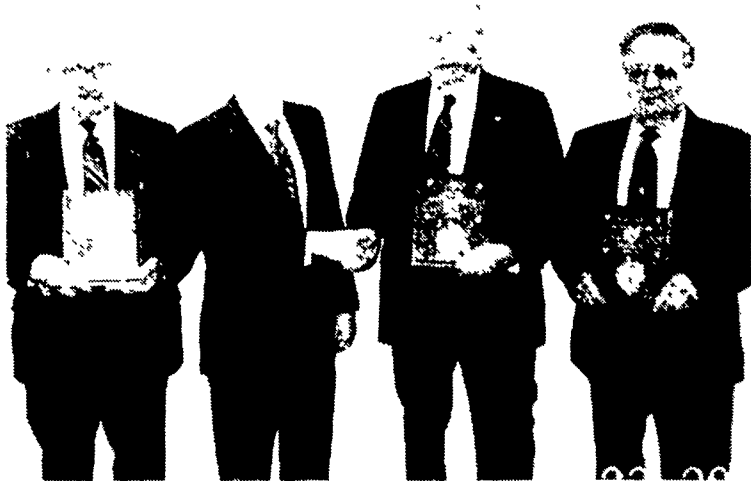
risk management tools is the proposed Farm and Ranch Risk Management accounts. Farmers would be permitted to save up to 20 percent of their net farm income per year in a tax-deferred account," Donaldson said. The reserves could be held for up to five years. "Such reserves could be classified as 'rainy day' accounts, but more importantly they would encourage producers to save for years when prices are down or crops are poor. This management tool is a much needed self-help economic tool for all farmers." Donaldson urged support of H.R. 957 to create the Farm and Ranch Risk Management accounts.

The Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), passed in 1996, changed the way pesticides are evaluated and registered for use. It also set a deadline for reevaluating all 9,000-plus existing pesticide tolerances by the year 2006. "EPA is trying to meet the deadline by taking shortcuts," Donaldson declared. "These shortcuts could deprive farmers the use of reliable, older crop protection products. Furthermore, this action directive is delaying the approval of new replacements."

EPA needs to use actual data and scientifically sound information when modifying or revoking any pesticide tolerances, Donaldson told lawmakers.

"We in Farm Bureau are calling for a Pesticide Advisory Committee to provide guidance to EPA and USDA. We also want Congress more involved in the process through timely reports by EPA and USDA," Donaldson said. The changes supported by Farm Bureau are contained in H.R. 1592, the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act of 1999.

"Farmers need new tools from off the farm to be able to compete in the world marketplace. It needs assurances from government that it is going to provide those necessary self-help opportunities for farmers to improve their economic situation. Farmers have proven beyond any doubt that they are willing to take the necessary risks to produce safe and wholesome food and fiber. However, it needs the support of Congress on these four or five key issues to curb the decline of a strong, viable agricultural base in Pennsylvania and the whole nation," Donaldson said.



CVC retiring directors, from left, Harry Mohn, 38 years of service; Paul Hornbaker, chairman; Wayne Craig, 39 years of service; and Raymond Shoemaker, six years of service.

Cumberland Valley Cooperative Conducts Annual Meeting

CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin Co.)—The 70th annual meeting of the Cumberland Valley Cooperative (CVC) was conducted recently at the Lighthouse Restaurant, with approximately 200 members and guests in attendance.

Election of directors was conducted by Nominating Committee Chairman Conwell Rife, and six directors were elected. They are Bobby Commerer, Jr., Shippensburg; Roger Dice, Chambersburg; Terry Eichelberger, Shippensburg; Emory Hamman, Newville; Harold Myers, Shippensburg; and Bob Shively, Shippensburg.

A report on board activities was given by Chairman Paul Hornbaker. Retirement of three long-time directors was announced, and recognition plaques awarded.

Raymond Shoemaker, Chambersburg, was honored for six years of outstanding service. Harry Mohn, Newburg, was honored for 38 years of outstanding service. Wayne Craig, Shippensburg, was honored for 39

years of outstanding service, including 17 years as vice-president and 15 yrs as president of the cooperative.

Reports were given on the past year's accomplishments by the management team of Rene Lavoie, general manager; Merle Harnish, treasurer; and Scott Hodgson, marketing and nutrition manager.

Profits of \$241,395 were announced with the following disbursement approved by the board: \$155,461 to unallocated reserves and \$85,934 to patronage refunds with 50 percent of those refunds disbursed in cash.

This is the fourth consecutive year that Cumberland Valley Cooperative has earned a profit and declared a patronage refund. In previous years, 30 percent of the refund was disbursed in cash. This year the board raised the disbursement to 50 percent because of the decrease in milk price and low cash crop income. In addition, a recall of 25 percent of the remaining 1968 preferred stock was announced.

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