

2000 N.Y. Budget One Of The Best For Agriculture

GLENMONT, N.Y. — Recently, New York's legislative leaders reached an agreement on the FY 2000-01 State Budget.

Although well past the April 1 deadline, this is one of the earliest agreements in recent years and one of the best for agriculture.

Due in large part to Governor Pataki, the Senate Majority's leadership, as well as support

from key Assembly members, this budget represents significant support of New York agriculture and the rural way of life.

Included in the budget is an historic \$12 million reform of the farmers' state and local sales tax exemption program, substantial reductions in the gross receipts tax for energy, and restoration of various agricultural programs around the state.

"We are more than pleased with this budget," said John W. Lincoln, president of New York Farm Bureau. "With the low commodity prices and weather disasters farmers have been enduring, the support our leaders have given agriculture will help to save farmers money at a time when they need it most."

Governor Pataki, through this budget, has shown that he is

truly supportive of agricultural economic development. This commitment was demonstrated through the inclusion of the \$1.3 million dedicated to the new Grow New York initiative.

In addition to the much needed clarification and expansion of the farmers' sales tax exemption program, Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Nancy Larraine Hoffmann (R-Syracuse) secured an early effective date of September 1, 2000 to ensure farmers will start saving money this year.

"The new sales tax reforms are very clear about what items are now exempt," said Lincoln. All items used in the farm business will now be exempt. "In addition, New York Farm Bureau has worked very hard to achieve recognition of the commercial horse boarding industry as a growing sector of New York agriculture. For the first time, commercial horse boarding op-

erations are now eligible to receive the same benefits on sales tax exemptions on items used in farming as the rest of the industry. This is a major step forward for agriculture."

Specific items included in exemptions effective September 1, 2000 are farm equipment, farm building construction materials, fencing, electricity, diesel, and other fuel used in farm production.

Assembly Agriculture Chair William Magee's (D-Nelson) efforts were key to achieving the programmatic funding which is necessary for the future of agriculture in New York State. Through his leadership, dairy farmers will have access to an expanded animal disease control program for John's disease, teachers of agriculture will have funding for an expanded curriculum to teach New York's children, and other key agricultural areas will be funded.

Milk Marketing Board Announces April Class I Price

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board (PMMB) announced the prices to be paid to Pennsylvania dairy farmers for April Class I milk as an average of \$14.78 in the western areas of the Commonwealth and an average of \$15.26 in the central and eastern areas of the Commonwealth. Class I milk is milk beverage type milk.

These prices do include the current over-order premium of \$1.20 per one hundred pounds of milk and - for the first time, the fuel adjustment premium of \$.25 per one hundred pounds of milk is included.

Since 1988, the PMMB has mandated over-order premiums on Class I milk due to adverse conditions affecting the Pennsylvania dairy farmer. The cur-

rent premium of \$1.20 was ordered to offset losses due to drought conditions. On Wednesday, May 3, the PMMB held a hearing for the purpose of evaluating this premium. Testimony that was presented supported continuing the premium at a level ranging from \$1.00 to \$1.20 per hundred pounds of milk due

to the record-low prices dairy farmers are currently receiving for their milk.

Chairwoman Beverly R. Minor announced that since the inception of the PMMB's over-order premium in 1988, Pennsylvania dairy farmers have received an additional \$200,512,000 in income.

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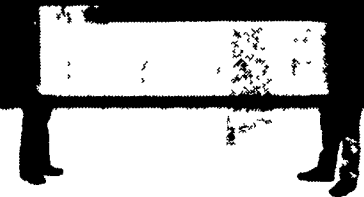
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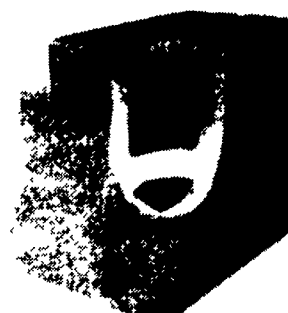
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