

PA Milk Dealers And New York Dairy Foods Host Joint Annual Convention

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About 170 representatives from processing plants and dairies throughout New York and Pennsylvania were charged with the message to remain united in preserving the dairy industry during the 13th Annual Combined Convention of the Pennsylvania Milk Dealers Association and New York State Dairy Foods, Inc.

The two-day convention was held at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center earlier this week. Two business sessions held on Monday and Tuesday mornings featured speakers from various aspects of the dairy industry.

On Tuesday morning, speakers included Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Samuel Hayes, Jr., Penn State dairy economist Ken Bailey, and Federal Order No. 1 Assistant Market Administrator David Walker.

Preserving natural resources that fuel the dairy industry was the number one challenge that Secretary Hayes cited for processors in the 21st century.

Hayes also challenged the audience that the dairy industry must become better at marketing.

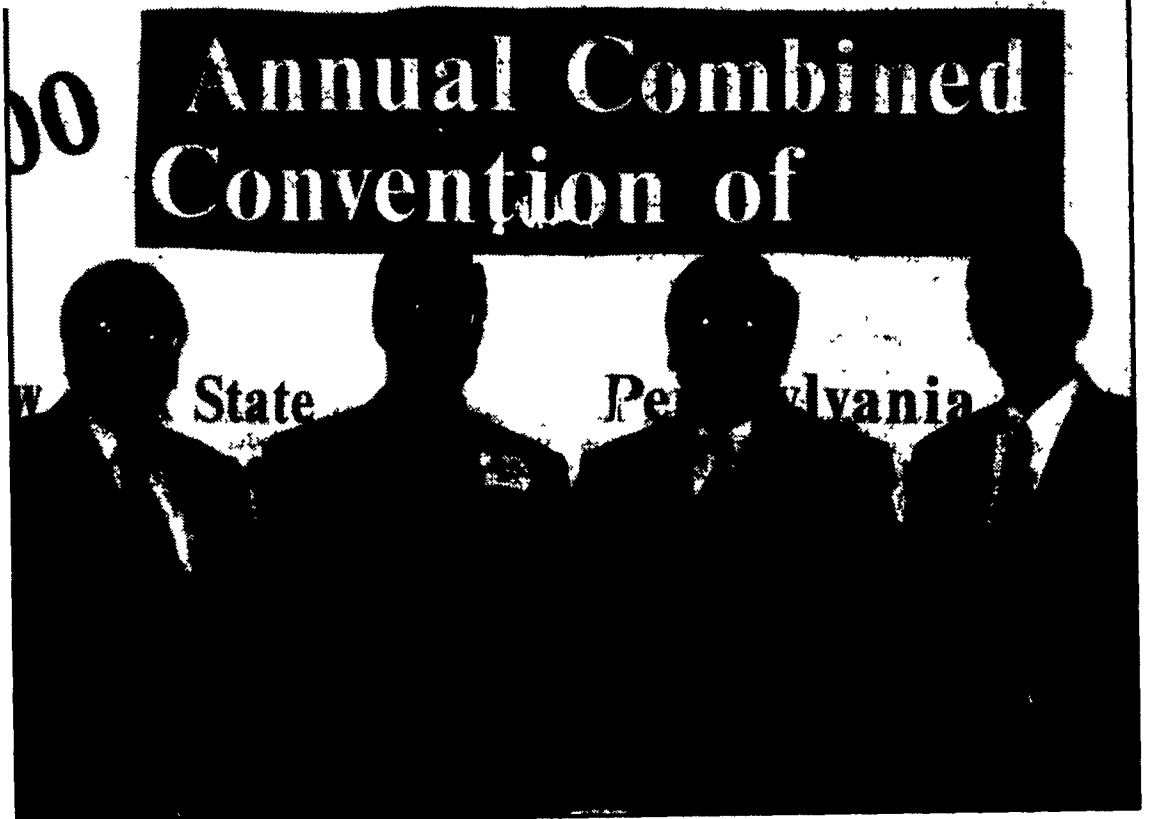
"For years, food and fiber have been essential so we haven't had to be as competitive," said Hayes. "But the ag industry, especially the beverage segment, is being challenged by competitors."

Hayes told processors not to hide their light under a bushel. "We have a calling beyond our day-to-day tasks to promote our industry," said Hayes. "If we do not have a strong agriculture industry, we will not have a strong economy or a strong state. We have to volunteer our time to become missionaries for agriculture."

David Walker, assistant market administrator for Federal Milk Order No. 1, spoke about federal order reform. "The good news is that we have gotten through the first four pools under the new system and we haven't turned off the lights yet."

According to Walker, they found out in November that the federal orders would be consoli-

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Speakers at the Tuesday morning session of the Joint Annual Convention were from left Bill Fitchett, president of New York State Dairy Foods, Inc.; Ken Bailey, associate professor of economics at Penn State; David Walker, assistant market administrator for Federal Milk Order No. 1; and Samuel Hayes, Jr., Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture.

"There's no doubt that if we want the dairy industry to continue to be as vibrant as it has been, we need to have the natural resources it depends on," said Hayes. "Farms and cows are being threatened here in Pennsylvania. That's why we have adopted a very good public policy to preserve our state's farms."

Hayes also emphasized that water would be an endangered resource in the 21st century.

"We have to have an abundant amount of water to produce milk," said Hayes. "Preserving these natural resources will be a gripping issue for agriculture in the 21st century."

Hayes encouraged processors to work closely with producers to preserve their right to farm.

"Farmers need to have the opportunity and right to farm," said Hayes. "For whatever reasons, everyday conditions are challenging those opportunities. We must ban together and be united in preserving the ag enterprise. If one segment of the industry is being challenged, then all segments are being challenged."

According to Hayes, consumers enjoy a very inexpensive food supply. Farmers must have the opportunity to profit from that food supply.

"Farming should not be a nonprofit business," said Hayes. "Profits invites people to enter and stay in the industry. The well spring of our progress starts with men and women having the opportunity to make a profit from their hard work on the farm."

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