

Gov. Ridge Commits \$90 Million Capital Investment From General Fund To Farm Show, Evaluation Center, And Veterinarian Facilities

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The Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex will receive \$66.2 million of the total to give the nearly 70-year-old facility a "facelift" of the existing historic buildings. In addition, a new 250,000 square-foot Exposition Center will be built and will include a trade show exhibit hall, meeting rooms and conference support facilities. A covered bridge will interconnect with the existing Large Area. A new parking garage also will be built with interconnections linking it to the new Expo Center and existing complex. Dreams of a hotel on site are also in the works.

The new facilities will be built above the flood plain and the renovations will address existing flooding issues. A new heating and air conditioning system for the entire complex will be installed. Design of the new Expo Center will begin later this year, with construction to commence by summer of 2001. The new Center should be completed by December of 2002-in time for the 2003 Farm Show.

"It doesn't get any better for Agriculture than this," said Dennis Grumbine, Farm Show director.

In his now famous evangelistic and thumbs up style, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Agriculture, Samuel Hayes Jr., introduced Gov. Ridge and at one point amid vigorous, and loud clapping and cheering, shouted into the speakers, "Let's hear it for the 'Gov.'" He credited Ridge and the legislators with producing the best budget for agriculture in history.

"We have never had a better ag budget than we do now," Hayes said. "We also want to thank our legislators for this tre-

mendous support of agriculture in our state. This is for the consumer as well as the farmer. We want to be good stewards of the capital we are using. That's why we want to keep the Farm Show Complex in the city of Harrisburg and the Capitol Region.

"This also sends a clear message to farmers that we recognize their accomplishments. There is no job as demanding as work on the family farm. We are leading the nation in farmland preservation. And here we are turning some of your tax dollars back into your profession, back into your 'love'. We are evolving as the state-of-the-art Commonwealth."

Penn's veterinary school will receive \$18 million of the total to build a new, first rate teaching and research building. For more than 100 years, Penn's veterinary graduates have contributed immensely to Pennsylvania's agriculture industry and their role has become even more vital to farmers in today's competitive environment. The new building will provide modern teaching and learning spaces, and replace the antiquated facilities currently in use. The school's interdisciplinary research programs will be greatly enhanced by the three laboratory floors.

Judith Rodin, president of the University of Pennsylvania said Gov. Ridge is a staunch supporter of Pennsylvania agriculture.

"Gov. Ridge recognizes the important role Penn's School of Veterinary Medicine and its graduates play in maintaining the health, welfare and success of the Commonwealth's livestock, poultry, and equine industries," she said. "We are

profoundly grateful to the Governor for his support for the new teaching and research building and for so decisively advancing the School's historic mission."

Among the areas of investigation in the new building will be infectious disease, a major reemerging threat to animal and human health; animal transgenesis and germ cell research, an exciting biomedical research area that promises healthier and more productive food animals; comparative medical genetics; and comparative oncology.

Penn's vet school contributes greatly to agriculture through its many services to farmers and owners of horses and companion animals. The School's two hospitals have the largest caseload of any veterinary university teaching hospital in the nation and they play an important role in maintaining the health and productivity of the State's livestock and equine industry.

The \$5.6 million committed the Livestock Evaluation Center, will allow the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) to build a new state-of-the-art facility near the Ag Progress Days site in Centre County. The new Center will replace an old, outdated facility that now sits near Beaver Stadium on Penn State's main campus. Construction of the new Center should be complete by spring 2002.

PDA directs the Livestock Evaluation Center through its

Bureau of Animal Health and Diagnostic Services. The Center is a testing station that conducts controlled and uniform feeding and management tests on either individual studs or sire groups within the three major species of meat animals so that genetic differences can be measured and evaluated. The Center is a unique facility that makes a contribution in solving problems facing the livestock industry. Experimental feedlots for cattle, swine and sheep are essential components for the comprehensive research program.

The purpose of the Evaluation Center is to investigate major genetic, biological, physical, and managerial influences on production efficiency and product quality in all segments of the production cycle for beef cattle, sheep, and swine. It is critically important to provide a uniform or standard protocol to test the animals for economically important traits that can be used to enhance the commercial livestock industry of Pennsylvania.

"Pennsylvania is positioned in the center of a major transportation and market network that provides meat products to the majority of the Northeast," Hayes said. "The Livestock Evaluation Center is a valuable

tool to help producers keep the Pennsylvania meat packers supplied with quality products for consumers."

Gov. Ridge noted that in planning for this announcement, the Administration set aside money in the state's general fund specifically for these projects to avoid the need to float bonds. This good management decision will save taxpayers \$50 million in interest.

The hard work and dedication of Pennsylvania's farm families continues to keep agriculture the number one industry of Pennsylvania. With \$4.1 billion in cash receipts, Keystone farmers and agribusinesses are the leading agricultural producers in the northeastern United States and some of the most productive in the country.

Agriculture employs more than 800,000 people and contributes more than 44 billion each year to the state's economy this includes support services such as food processing, marketing, transportation, as well as manufacturing all the products and equipment used on the farm.

After the formal program, a reception was held in the exhibit hall, and Gov. Ridge visited the Dauphin County 4-H Fair that was in progress in the building.

Average Farm Feed Costs for Handy Reference

To help farmers across the state to have handy reference of commodity input costs in their feeding operations for DHIA record sheets or to develop livestock feed cost data, here's last week's average costs of various ingredients as compiled from regional reports across the state of Pennsylvania.

Remember, these are averages, so you

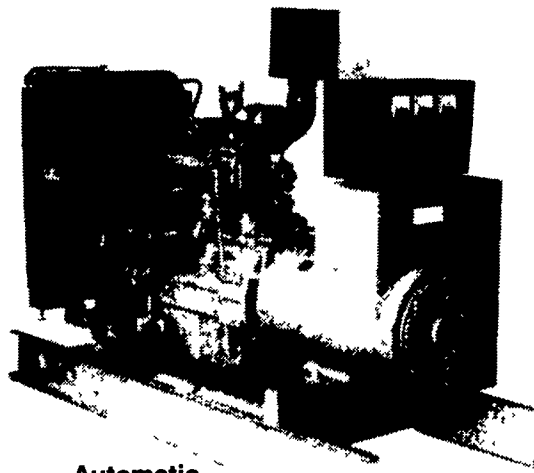
will need to adjust your figures up or down according to your location and the quality of your crop.

Corn, No.2y — 2.16 bu., 3.87 cwt.
Wheat, No.2 — 1.98 bu., 3.31 cwt.
Barley, No.3 — 1.37 bu., 2.92 cwt.
Oats, No.2 — 1.32 bu., 4.13 cwt.
Soybeans, No.1 — 4.15 bu., 6.93 cwt.
Ear Corn — 70.42 ton, 3.5 cwt.
Alfalfa Hay — 97.50 ton, 4.88 cwt.
Mixed Hay — 102.50 ton, 5.13 cwt.
Timothy Hay — 100.00 ton, 5.0 cwt.

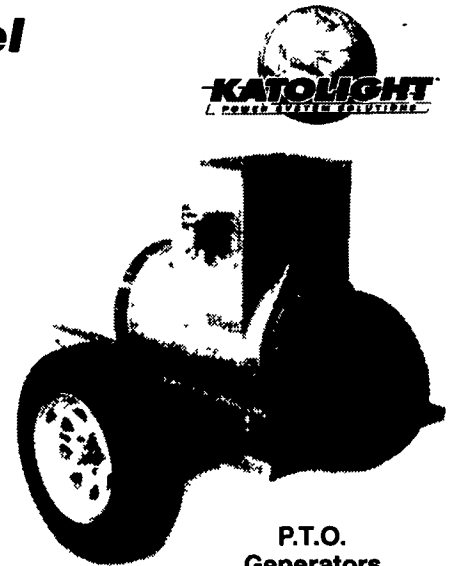
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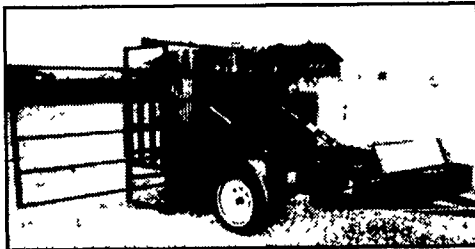
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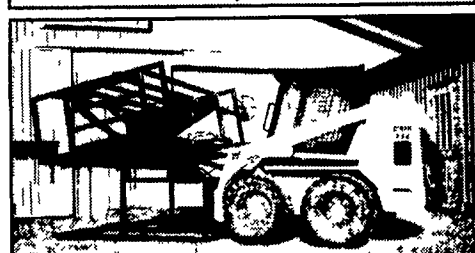
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