



NFU's 99th Anniversary Convention In Rochester

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., president of the Water Keeper Alliance and son of the late U.S. senator and attorney general, will join hundreds of the nation's family farmers and ranchers in Rochester, N.Y., March 2-5, for National Farmers Union's (NFU) 99th anniversary convention at the Four Points Hotel.

U.S. Reps. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., and Maurice Hinchey, D-N.Y., are featured speakers for this year's event.

Kennedy will give the convention's keynote address on Friday evening, March 2, as a part of the

opening session. His speech is scheduled for 8 p.m. Reps. Hinchey and Slaughter will each address the convention at a Sat., March 3, banquet that begins at 6:30 p.m.

"A new Congress signals a fresh start for the development of family farm and ranch policy," said Leland Swenson, president of NFU. "While some of the names and the balance of power are new, we face many of the same challenges that rural America saw as we began the last year."

"In March, we will gather to build on the momentum we cre-

ated over the past year to address issues such as concentration, low prices and the reform of federal farm programs. We will also share with each other the information and expertise we have gained through our efforts to serve farm and ranch families throughout the year."

Sat., March 3 will also feature two important discussions. The

morning discussion will address needed policy changes to the 1996 farm law. The afternoon will feature a farm leader roundtable where participants will discuss not only important policy, market and structural realities faced by farmers, but, also, important social and community concerns of rural citizens.

Sun., March 4 will feature several afternoon forums that will address the role of faith communities in the current rural, economic and social crisis, industrial concentration in agriculture and the food system, and trade challenges with China.

Delegates will consider and adopt the 2001 NFU policy program on Mon., March 5.

Easement Sellers Can Keep More

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Farmers selling agricultural conservation easements want to get the best price they can for their development rights.

But capital gains tax often takes a big portion of the sale price right off the closing table.

Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Sam Hayes announced that the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) has a way for sellers to increase what they get to keep, and not just what they get, when selling easements.

Under a new option developed by PDA, farmers can sell easements using installment purchase agreements (IPAs) that defer all or part of the purchase price for up to 30 years. In the interim, sellers receive interest twice a year on the outstanding balance. As with a municipal bond, interest payments are exempt from federal and Pennsylvania state income taxes.

By deferring payment of the purchase price for up to 30 years, IPAs are designed to allow sellers to defer capital gains tax for a

similar period. For many sellers, that means they'll never pay capital gains tax in their lifetimes. Heirs can sell IPAs in the municipal bond market as a way of paying estate taxes or capital gains taxes.

Capital gains tax is due when a seller receives payment for appreciated land or other assets. Capital gain is the difference between the sale price and the value of the property when it was first bought or inherited. The IRS taxes capital gains at a maximum rate of 20 percent and Pennsylvania at a maximum 2.8 percent rate.

Howard County, Maryland, has used 30-year IPAs to buy easements on 9,200 acres from 81 sellers since 1989. Similar programs are under way in Harford and Anne Arundel counties, Maryland; Virginia Beach, Virginia; and Burlington County, New Jersey.

PDA is recommending IPAs to county farmland preservation boards, because the structure minimizes cash needed to close on purchases. The rural charac-

ter of many parts of Pennsylvania will be lost forever unless development rights are purchased soon. IPAs permit as many as five times more purchases in the short term than if cash were paid for each acquisition.

At the time farmers apply to their counties to sell development rights, they'll be asked to choose among an all-cash or installment purchase, or some combination of the two. After the terms of the sale are agreed upon, the purchase is submitted to PDA for approval. Closing can occur within six months of state approval.

Additional information regarding installment purchase can be obtained from each county farmland preservation board or by contacting Raymond C. Pickering, Director of PDA's Bureau of Farmland Preservation, at (717) 783-3167. To discuss tax treatment of easement sales, contact Michael W. Evanish, manager of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's MSC Business Services, at (717) 731-3546 or mwevanish@pfb.com.

Milkers' Training School Offered

MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — One of the important tasks to be performed on a dairy farm is milking cows. A Milkers' Training School will be held on Tues., March 13 at the Hershey Brothers farm north of Manheim.

The purpose of the school is to offer basic training to milkers and to demonstrate training techniques to those who manage the milking crew. Some of the topics to be addressed include: understanding the udder and the milk letdown process, proper udder preparation and milking procedures, producing high quality milk, preventing udder infections, animal handling and moving techniques, detecting and handling animals that need special attention, recording and reporting pertinent data, understanding the milking system,

setting up the equipment for milking and proper cleanup after milking, responding to emergency problems with animals and equipment, etc. Anyone interested in milking is invited to attend.

Penn State encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact Glenn Shirk at (717) 394-6851 in advance of your participation or visit.

Attendance is by reservation only. This is a Capital Regional Extension program. Reservations can be made by calling the York County Extension office (717) 840-7408 and will be accepted on a first-come basis.