USDA-NRCS Receives AFO Regulation Comments

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FREDERICK, Md. — In a promising gesture of outreach to local individual farmers, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) division of the USDA conducted six regional public meetings, called "listening sessions," rather than hearings.

The sessions were conducted to explain the goals and process in developing new regulations and guidelines regarding animal feeding operations (AFO) and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO). These meetings, such as the one in Frederick, Md. July 30 and concluding in Indianapolis, Ind. July 31, gave farmers the opportunity to speak their piece regarding these issues as outlined in the Federal Register, Volume 66, Number 128, Tuesday, July 3, 2001, available on the internet at www.nara.gov.

The plan is to develop and implement new and comprehensive nutrient management programs (CNMP). Both farmers and vendors were invited to speak and are encouraged to write. All aspects of operations such as manure and wastewater handling and storage, feeding schedules and formulations, land treatment practices, recordkeeping, and especially innovative solutions to situations that are considered problems are encouraged. In addition, the agency is willing to receive written comments until Wednesday, Aug. 15. Faxes can be sent to the agency at (301) 504-2264.

In conversations with a number of top individuals, including Thomas A. Weber, department chief for programs; Thomas W. Christensen, director of animal husbandry and clean waters division; Jose Acezdo and Carol Jeff, associate deputy chiefs of programs; and Lawrence Clark, deputy chief for science and technology, USDA, farmers noted the officials are not only interested in the position of farmers, but also in any innovative management methods that farmers have applied to the problems of water quality control (including nutrient management).

This attitude of interest and outreach was most emphatic at the Frederick meeting, where very few farmers spoke very eloquently. The meeting adjourned by 11:30 a.m. rather than the scheduled 3:30 p.m. Yet, this was the most highly attended meeting (more than 120 attended) of the six sessions.

The other meeting also showed a sense of confidence and delivery by the farmers that participated. These meetings were in Davis, Calif.; Raleigh, N.C.; Austin, Texas; Denver, Colo.; and Indianapolis, Ind. The results will be summarized in a working document at a later date.

USDA Names National Pork Board Members

DES MOINES, Iowa — The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has announced five people to serve three-year terms on the National Pork Board. The National Pork Board is a group of 15 people nominated by pork producers or importers, elected by the Pork Act Delegates at the National Pork Industry Forum and officially appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

The National Pork Board members appointed to serve from 2001 to 2004 are John Q. Adams, Snow Hill, N.C.; Danita S. Rodibaugh, Rensselaer, Ind.; Thomas J. Floy, Thornton, Iowa; Bradley K. Thornton, Eagle, Idaho; and William Scott Long, Manteca, Calif.

The National Pork Board members will meet in San Francisco, Calif., Aug. 7-9, to conduct business, including electing new officers. Continuing National Pork Board members are: John Kellogg, Yorkville, Ill.; Hugh Dorminy, Russellville, Ark.; Richard Alig, Okarche, Okla.; Michael Bayes, Orient, Ohio; Craig Christensen, Bouton, Iowa; David Culbertson, Geneseo, Ill.; Chet McManus, Fulton, S.D.; Sharon Oetting, Concordia, Mo.; Marlin Pankratz, Mt. Lake, Minn.; and Mark Reding, Howardstown, Ky.

BUSINESS PAGE APPEARS IN SECTION D
See the latest in equipment and material news, promotions and new hires, and burgeoning ag ventures on the business news page located in Section D this issue!

Agriculture Department To Offer 47 Boars From Annual Performance Test

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Sam Hayes invites all swine breeders to attend the Department's Annual Performance Test Boar Sale Aug. 15 at the Penn State Ag Arena in State College.

The gavel falls on the auction block at 6 p.m. Forty-seven boars will be offered for purchase.

"This sale provides the very best genetics available from the Department's annual performance test," Hayes said. "The boars to be offered at the sale would complement any herd they enter into."

The annual Boar Performance Test, sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, helps Pennsylvania's swine industry stay on the cutting edge by providing high quality genetics through the test. Conducted at the Department's Livestock Evaluation Center in State College, the boars placed on test are evaluated in a controlled environment to measure genetic traits and performance. At the completion of the test, the highest-ranking boars are offered for auction to swine producers looking for high quality boars.

For a sale catalog or information about the boar sale, contact Glenn Eberly at (814) 238-2527, or visit the Department of Agriculture's homepage through the PA PowerPort at www.state.pa.us or directly at www.pda.state.pa.us.

New Dairy Industry Relations Manager Hired

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program (PDPP) has welcomed Tom Smith to the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council (ADADC) Mid East as an industry relations manager for western and north-central Pennsylvania.

Based in Harrisburg, Smith's responsibilities include serving as a spokesperson for PDPP and ADADC Mid East in the agricultural community, working with the PDPP board, informing dairy farmers about their checkoff investment, and conducting special events unique to Pennsylvania.

Before joining PDPP, Smith was a sire analyst for Atlantic Breeders Co-op. He also was the international market development manager for Pennsylvania DHIA and organization director for the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

Smith is a graduate of Delaware Valley College with a major in dairy husbandry. During his college career, Smith received the Dairy Shrine Award and was on the 1983 dairy judging team.

Growing up with Guernseys on his family dairy farm in Palmyra, Tom is no stranger to the dairy industry. Smith currently lives in Palmyra with his wife, Sandi, and their four children.

PDPP contracts with the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council Mid East to implement advertising, marketing, promotion, and nutrition education program on behalf of dairy farmers in 33 counties in western and north-central Pennsylvania.

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