

Stakeholders Conduct Meeting During Conference

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Lancaster Farming Staff

GRANTVILLE (Dauphin Co.) — Approximately 200 dairy industry representatives gathered early Thursday morning for a business meeting at the Holiday Inn, part of the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders 2001 Conference.

Allyn Lamb, treasurer, gave the treasurers report followed by Ralph Heffner, chair of the nominating committee, who offered board member nominees. Members include Chuck Cruickshank, Allyn Lam, David McCorkle, and Paul Semmel. The term limit is six years for the board of directors, who meet four times a year.

Joe Rotz highlighted the Business Planning Assistance Program (BPAP), introduced three years ago. The program has awarded \$40,000 in grants to 30 Pennsylvania dairy farm businesses. Producers use the money to hire consultants to develop a business plan for their operation.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has also given financial support to the program.

Results from a phone survey to acquire feedback about the program, said Rotz, showed that 50 percent of participants reported increased profitability as a result of the program.

Ernie Gelsinger, who along with his two brothers and nephew operate a 160-cow dairy along with 100 steers and 1,500 acres, reported on their experience with BPAP.

"We were looking for the point that yields maximum return for the amount of resources that we have," he said. A feasibility study with the consultant helped him realize "how things fit together," which prompted them to work on plans to build a new facility.

The partnership has also recently acquired a neighboring farm, so they are milking at two facilities.

Ralph Heffner recognized this year's Pacesetter Award recipients, who were named at Ag Progress Days. "This award recognizes those who are visionary, innovative, progressive, and described by excellence in performance," he said.

One of the Pacesetter Award recipients is John Hess, his wife and four children, in partnership on Jobo Holsteins Farm.

The 500-cow, 900-acre farm has a "vision to build a business to include the next generation," according to Heffner. The family hires consultants, adopts new practices, hosts tours and educational meetings, and allows 4-H'ers to house their calves on

the farm.

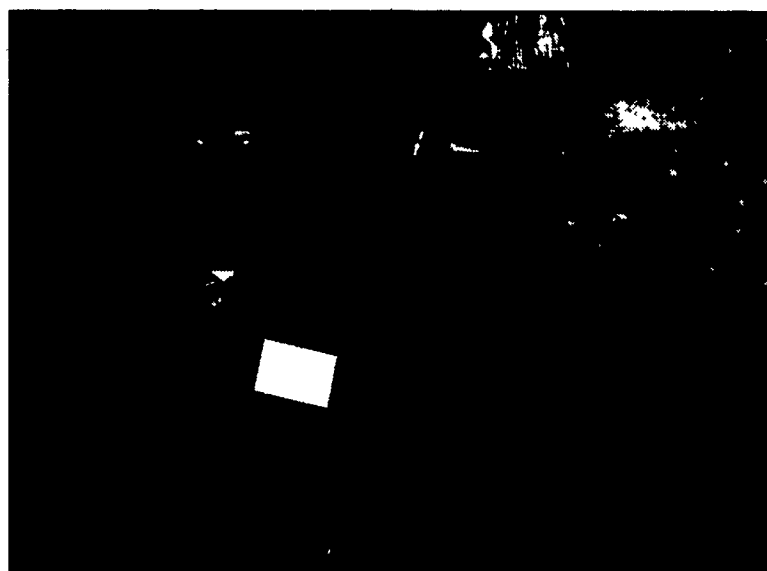
Among other goals, they are focused on profitability, marketing a quality product, and community involvement.

Tom and Sherry Craig, Murmac Farms, Bellefonte, capitalize on outside expertise with an outside advisory team and use experts from inside and outside agriculture to train workers, said Heffner. They also provide English classes for the farm's Hispanic workers and host Penn State classes and internships.

Sam Hayes, secretary of agriculture, also spoke to the group. Hayes reported about his recent trip to Mexico with a group of students in the "Export for Scholars" program, which centers on exchanging dairy information and animals.

Hayes also highlighted BPAP, noting that "there is no way that one could be a success in the 21st century without a business plan — we cannot expect to compete by happenstance and good luck."

Robert Steel, dean of Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, is encouraged by the forward movement of agriculture and urged producers to "get better by keeping very much aware of what's going on around you and playing to whatever your future might bring,"



John Hess, left, and Tom Craig were recognized as recipients of the Pacesetter Award.

he said.

"When we look ahead, it's really quite exciting, particularly when you are looking at the long view, to see the economy moving from a petroleum- to a biology-based economy. My questions is, what's the pace of that change?"

"If we are ready for it, we will capitalize on it," said Steele.

Richard Waybright, president, remarked that "it's gratifying to see how far we've come," but added that "I think we underesti-

mate what we can accomplish. I'm impressed by the opportunities that I have seen happen in the dairy industry in Pennsylvania."

Waybright broadened his view to foreign soils, however, by adding, "it's our opportunity to invite young people abroad to come experience agriculture here. Those are the kinds of experiences that will give us fuel to accomplish what our true potential is in Pennsylvania."

House Passes HR 3005, TPA Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed HR 3005 with a vote of 215 in favor and 214 opposed. There were six members abstaining. If passed by the Senate and signed into law, this legislation will allow negotiators to work for cattle producers to provide increased access to international markets and provide for wider U.S. participation in the global marketplace.

"The Trade Promotion Authority legislation passed by the House will enable U.S. negotia-

tors to provide leadership and negotiate for increased access to global beef markets and will expand opportunities for American agriculture," said Chuck Lambert, National Cattlemen's Beef Association's (NCBA) chief economist.

"U.S. agriculture is the most productive and efficient in the world, but many markets remain out of reach simply because of trade barriers," said Lambert. "U.S. beef faces tariffs of 38.5 percent and 40 percent, respectively, in Japan and Korea and the EU is the

world's largest user of beef export subsidies. The only way to eliminate those barriers and unfair trade practices is through determined negotiation."

Trade Promotion Authority provides a partnership between Congress and the President to achieve the best possible result for U.S. interests in international trade negotiations. With Trade Promotion Authority, the President has the authority to efficiently move forward on trade issues while continuing to consult with Congress.

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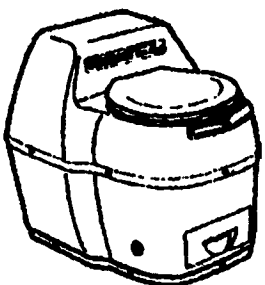
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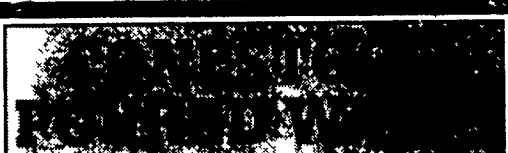
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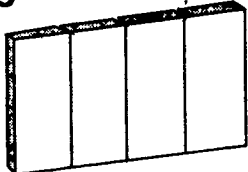
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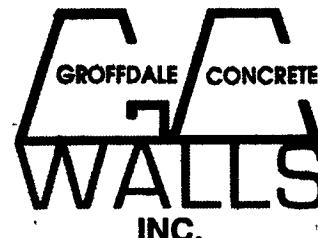
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