

# State Farm Bureau Lauds Reform Of Legal System

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau hailed passage of legislation by the General Assembly last week which reforms Pennsylvania's legal system to discourage the pursuit of "lawsuit lottery" by attorneys.

"Reform of our civil justice system has been a priority goal of our organization for many years," said Guy Donaldson, president of the statewide farm organization. "The system encouraging 'lawsuit lottery' has meant only one thing to our farmers — higher costs of doing business. Passage of this legislation is the best thing to happen to our state's legal system in 50 years."

The General Assembly has approved Senate Bill 1089, the Fair Share Act, which Gov. Schweiker has pledged to sign. The legislation reforms Pennsylvania's "joint and several liability" system whereby each defendant found liable in a civil lawsuit is responsible for paying the full amount of a verdict.

"Under joint and several liability, a defendant found to be only one percent responsible could be held liable for 100 percent of the damages," said Donaldson. "The system encourages a type of lawsuit abuse known as 'lawsuit lottery' whereby personal injury attorneys go after defendants with 'deep pockets' seeking huge awards no matter how much at fault the defendant actually was.

"'Lawsuit lottery' impacts farmers directly through higher business insurance costs, and also indirectly when a manufacturer's higher liability costs are reflected in higher purchase prices for their products. It also increases tax burdens because of the additional insurance governments must carry for self-protection."

The Fair Share Act replaces joint and several liability with a proportional liability system. Defendants would have to be found to be 60 percent or more responsible in order for joint and several liability to apply. The legislation maintains exceptions for negligence due to fraud and intentional acts, or involving environmental hazards and alcohol-related accidents.

# Corn Weed Control Field Meetings Set

WEST LEROY (Bradford Co.) — A pair of field meetings are scheduled at the LeRoydale Farm near West Leroy to help corn producers evaluate several newer herbicide products for use in field corn. A series of herbicide plots have been established at the farm to help with the demonstration and evaluation of these products. The farm is owned and managed by Owen, Paul, and Jon Brackman.

The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 2 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. A second meeting which some producers may find more convenient is scheduled for Wednesday, July 3 from 12:30 till 2 p.m. There is no registration requirement and visitors can choose either time. It is anticipated the meeting will be worth one core and two category 01 updated credits.

The plots will help visitors compare costs, application timings, and the effectiveness of the various pre-emergent and post-emergent materials. Growers will then be able to determine how well the various programs might

fit into their own corn production enterprise.

Penn State Cooperative Extension is sponsoring the meeting being hosted by Brackmans. The farm is located on Rt. 414 about five miles east of Canton. The field site is located just west of the farm buildings on the south side of Rt. 414. Signs will be posted from Rt. 414. Switchel and other refreshments will be provided by Terry Lutz, SULBRA Crop Management Association.

Another key part of the meeting will be a discussion about using the appropriate gloves for handling pesticides. Many times growers aren't certain which glove material is appropriate for the material being handled. Examples of the many glove types will be available to see and compare.

Participants interested in obtaining update credits should bring their restricted-use pesticide certificate to the meeting. Any questions about the program can be directed to Mark Madden at the Sullivan County extension office at (570) 928-8941.

# Grange Urges Congress To "Wake-Up," Pass Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Participants in the National Grange's annual Legislative Fly-In took out a full-page advertisement in the Capitol Hill newspaper, Roll Call, last week with an image of a rooster and the headline "Rural America Says: Wake Up! Pass Medicare Rx Coverage Now!"

Signed by 16 of the National Grange's most influential state legislative leaders, the ad reminded Congress that one out of

three older Americans has no prescription drug coverage and that this dangerous reality has an enormous impact on rural Americans.

"For rural Americans, quality medical care and access to medicine are basically one and the same, thus rural seniors are especially at risk," said Leroy Watson, the National Grange's legislative affairs director. "The message in Roll Call says that exactly."

The one out of three older Americans without prescription coverage is a statistic that is a devastating reality, and the ad served to remind Congress and policy makers that this problem cannot be solved by risky drug importation plans or one-size-fits-all approaches. The National Grange called on Congress to act now by enacting coverage legislation that provides seniors with choice, options, access and quality.

# Pennsylvania Farmers Union Offers Improvements To SB 1413

MIFFLINTOWN (Juniata Co.) — Pennsylvania Farmers Union is calling state Senate Bill 1413 a "Band-Aid approach" to addressing concerns with non-family farm operations.

PFU President Larry Breech said his organization is concerned that the amendment to the 1982 Right-to-Farm Law hinders municipalities from protecting its citizens and communities. Breech said PFU also questions whether the 1982 law (P.L. 454, No. 133) adequately protects Pennsylvania's family farms and communities.

"Pennsylvania Farmers Union stands ready to develop solutions that are in the best interest of our family farmers and our rural communities," Breech said. "Agriculture has changed dramatically in the last few years, and we need to be progressive in updating the relevance of our laws and regulations."

Breech offered several solutions to restore competition in ag-

riculture, enforce social and environmental responsibility and protect family and rural communities. To ensure adequate competition in agricultural markets, PFU recommends a ban on corporate ownership of livestock held more than 14 days prior to slaughter and production contracts that ensure fairness and openness.

The family farm organization also supports: provisions to reduce or eliminate ammonia, ammonium or nitrate losses; regulations to control odor and particulate emissions; priorities to address water rights, availability and utilization; and science-based guidelines on where large-scale farming operations may be built. PFU also seeks provisions that require an agricultural corporation to be responsible for manure management and potential property devaluation as a result of its operation.

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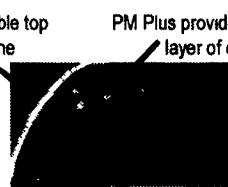
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