

# Farm Group Leaders Back Rendell Plan To Cut Property Taxes

**DAVE LEFEVER**  
Lancaster Farming Staff

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, State Grange, and PennAg Industries stand behind the key provisions of Gov. Ed Rendell's plan to cut property taxes, increase education funding, and stimulate economic growth for agriculture.

Joining Rendell and Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff at a press conference Tuesday in the Governor's Reception Room at the Capitol were Guy Donaldson,

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) president; Bob Gueldner, president of PennAg Industries; and Betsy Huber, Pennsylvania Grange master.

Calling the state's property tax system an "inequitable burden for our members," Donaldson said Rendell's plan to reduce property taxes is the beginning of a fairer tax system for the state's farmers.

"Although Governor Rendell's plan affects only a portion of farm property, it's an important first step," Donaldson said.

Donaldson's approval was offset by his concern that funds for rural school will continue to be shortchanged under the new plan.

"Many rural school districts do not have the tax base to support adequate operations," he said. "Farm Bureau has advocated increasing the state's portion of public school funding to 50 percent."

"We also welcome an economic stimulus plan that targets investment in rural Pennsylvania," Donaldson said. "The new pro-

posal to make more low-interest loans available will help farmers update or expand their operations to remain competitive."

Gueldner and Huber also endorsed the plan to cut taxes for farm and homeowners.

According to Huber, the proposed property tax cuts will mean an average saving of \$387 per property owner across the state, including homesteads and farmsteads.

Property taxes have increased 55 percent in the past ten years, she noted.

Gueldner spoke of the challenges faced by farmers across the state, including low commodity prices and recent drought.

"Agriculture will follow (the decline) of the steel and coal industries if not given an economic boost," Gueldner said.

He suggested that the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture work together with the Department of Community and Economic Development to create economic incentives.

"As the number one industry (agriculture) goes, so goes the state," he said.

## Marketing Workshop Set At Simple Gifts Farm

**MANHEIM** (Lancaster Co.) — Producers and beginning farmers who would like to improve their marketing and production skills, are invited to attend a Pennsylvania Farm Link sponsored meeting at Simple Gifts Farm June 25 from 6 to 9 p.m.

Jonathan Weaver-Kreider, the operator of a 70-member Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) will provide information on how to start a CSA, marketing strategies and production practices he uses, and a tour of the farm.

CSA or Subscription farming is essentially grower contracting and can be applied to any type of farm. The producer "contracts" with the consumer to provide a specific type of product during a specific time period, and with a specific delivery date.

Weaver-Kreider completed a master degree in agroecology, worked as an integrated pest management scout, and did internships on other organic vegetable operations before starting his own farm on rented ground. He continued to grow the operation to its current three acres size and hopes to purchase his own

farm in the near future. Information on marketing trends and tips for developing subscription/CSA markets will be included.

To get to Simple Gifts Farm, take the Columbia Exit (Rt. 441) off of Rt. 30. Travel south on Rt. 441 through Columbia. Watch for signs for 441 in Columbia because it makes two turns. Travel South about 3 miles to Washington Boro where Rt. 441 intersects Rt. 999. Pass straight through this intersection and continue about 500 feet and go straight into the farm lane. A small Simple Gifts sign is at the entrance. There is a stone barn and white house.

Contact Farm Link at (717) 664-7077 or email at pafarm-link@redrose.net by June 23 to let them know of your planned attendance and for additional information on other marketing events. The meeting is offered free of charge.

Farm Link will sponsor another marketing meeting on value-added marketing on September 13, 2003 in Kutztown to assist beginners and others who want to improve their marketing ability.

## Congressman To Speak At Farm Bureau Picnic

**CAMP HILL** (Cumberland Co.) — FARMER, the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's political action committee will host a picnic Sunday, June 22, at Indian Echo Caverns, Hummelstown.

Congressman Tim Holden will be speaking at 2:00 p.m. Holden will address the US farm economy and what is being done in Washington to boost farm profitability.

The event is open to the public. There is a pig roast and barbeque lunch at 1:00 p.m. The cost to attend is \$25.00 per person or \$40.00 per couple. Children ages 2-17 are \$10.00. A group rate will be offered to any Farm Bureau member who wishes to tour the caves. Deadline to purchase tickets is June 15. To reserve a place at the picnic, call Keith Oellig at (717) 469-0180 or Allen Shissler at (717) 944-3690.

## Dairy Technology Society Honors O'Hara

**WESTMINSTER, Md.** — The Dairy Technology Society of Maryland and the District of Columbia recently recognized long-time member Allen O'Hara with its Distinguished Service Award.

The award is the society's highest honor and was established in 1972 to recognize a person who has made significant contributions to the dairy industry. O'Hara is the 19th honoree and was recognized for his more than 25 years of service and dedication to Maryland's dairy industry.

O'Hara is the assistant general manager for Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers, where he has worked for more than 25 years. O'Hara is responsible for all member service functions, including field and administrative services and communications. His area of responsibility also includes Maryland & Virginia's



Allen O'Hara

manufacturing plant in Laurel, Md., and the equipment supply warehouse in Frederick, Md.

Throughout his career, O'Hara has been involved in a number of

dairy and agricultural organizations. He was active in the Maryland Council of Farmer Cooperatives for about 20 years and served as president of both the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation and the Dairy Technology Society of Maryland and the District of Columbia.

O'Hara is a graduate of the University of Maryland and was raised on a dairy farm in Frederick, Md. O'Hara and his wife, Janice, have four children and are active in their church.

Founded in 1938 by Dr. Walter England, the Dairy Technology Society of Maryland and the District of Columbia promotes good fellowship and mutual understanding among dairy industry professionals, and provides an open forum for dairy science related information and topics of interest to members and students pursuing careers within the industry.

## Over-Order Premium Increased To \$1.65

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board Chairman Boyd E. Wolff recently announced that board members voted to increase the current over-order premium of \$1.55 to \$1.65 per one hundred pounds of milk. The over-order premium is paid on Class I (bottled) milk produced, processed, and sold within the commonwealth. The \$1.65 will be in effect from July 1 through Dec. 31. The

current over-order premium of \$1.55 is due to expire June 30, 2003.

This action is the result of a hearing conducted May 22. The hearing took place in response to a petition submitted to the board by the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, and a petition submitted by Dairylea Cooperative, Dairy Marketing Services, and the Northeast Council of Dairy Farmers of America.

Testimony presented at the

hearing recommended varying levels of the over-order premium and varying lengths of times the premium should be effective. The board determined that the disparity in the recommended over-order premium levels and the disparity in the recommended time the premium should be effective were indicative of a certain amount of flux or uncertainty in the market.

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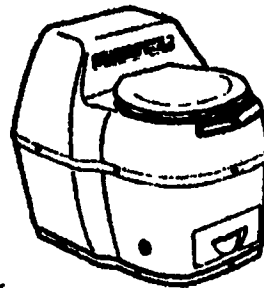
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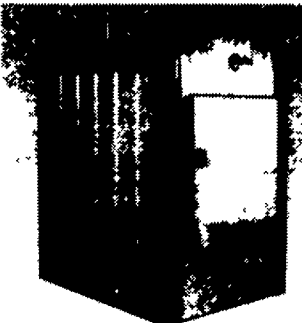
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Quality hay production is the focus of the July 12 edition of the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council's *Foraging Around* newsletter in *Lancaster Farming*. Also scheduled: Project Grass youth contest coverage, conservation updates, reports on forage preservation, and a calendar of events.



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