

Maryland Poultry Industry Lauds Environmental Ruling

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The attempt by former Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening and his Department of the Environment (MDE) to create environmental "co-permitting" between Maryland's poultry companies and the independent farm families that grow their chickens has been brought to an end thanks to a ruling by the independent, Final Decision Maker of the Maryland Department of the Environment.

The decision means the state of Maryland will not seek modifications of the poultry companies' wastewater discharge permits to make them responsible for on-farm litter/manure handling practices of the poultry growers.

The ruling affirms an August 2002 decision by administrative law judge Neile S. Friedman with the Maryland Office of Adminis-

trative Hearings who wrote that MDE did not have the authority to create the co-permitting.

Poultry industry officials expressed pleasure with the ruling. DPI President Douglas W. Green, himself a poultry grower, said, "This is a victory for farm families that grow chickens, the poultry companies with facilities in Maryland, and the citizens of the state whose tax money was wasted in this clearly illegal scheme by the former governor."

Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. (DPI) and the Maryland Farm Bureau, representing their poultry grower and farmer members, and Delmarva's poultry companies spent nearly two million dollars to fight co-permitting while the state of Maryland spent countless dollars and man-hours supporting it.

DPI President Green said,

"This huge amount of money and resources could have been used for legitimate water quality improvement programs instead of wasting it on this legal fight. This decision is total vindication for the poultry industry's arguments that co-permitting is illegal. It's time to move ahead and work voluntarily with Governor Robert L. Ehrlich's government on matters that will actually improve the quality of Maryland's water."

Already the poultry industry voluntarily is working to make better use of chicken litter. These programs include transporting the litter to other farming areas that have need for it and converting raw litter into a pelletized, fertilizer product. In addition, Delmarva's poultry companies are amending the chicken feed so fewer nutrients are in the manure.

PennAg Industries Support Part Of Proposed Plan

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — PennAg President, Robert Gueldner of Best Feed and Farm Supplies, recently expressed the Association's support of portions of Gov. Rendell's proposed Plan for a New Pennsylvania, which includes reducing taxes and stimulating economic development in rural Pennsylvania.

In a ceremony conducted at the Capitol last week, Gueldner stood to support the plan along with the leaders from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the Pennsylva-

nia Farm Bureau, and the Pennsylvania State Grange.

Gueldner opened his remarks by stating, "Times are tough down on the farm. The number one industry in Pennsylvania, agriculture, is doomed to follow some of our other major industries if agriculture and rural Pennsylvania aren't given some kind of an economic boost."

Gueldner continued by expressing the farmers' concerns with the current tax rates. "As

owners of the largest land base in the state, farmers are paying a disproportionate share of taxes to rural school districts and other forms of government that rely on estate taxes to sustain them. We believe that the Plan for a New Pennsylvania will help address this problem by helping to alleviate some of the burden on farmers," Gueldner said.

Farm Group President Criticizes NAFTA

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — During testimony before the Pennsylvania Democratic Legislative Caucus recently, Pennsylvania Farmers Union President Larry Breech emphasized the adverse effects that current trade treaties have had on employment and income levels at the local and state levels.

"NAFTA and GATS have not been good for Pennsylvania," Breech said of the North American Free Trade Agreement and General Agreement on Trade in Services. "These treaties have cost us jobs and economic growth and endanger the rights of our citizens to govern themselves at the state and local level."

"Treaty laws trump local and state laws and give multinational corporations virtually unlimited power to wage economic war against working people without having to be held accountable for their actions," Breech said. "What we

really need are agreements that level the field, not tilt it toward corporate special interests."

Leon Oboler, state organizer for the Pennsylvania Fair Trade Coalition, offered supporting data illustrating the significant loss of Pennsylvania jobs and income. Oboler said that, according to the U.S. Labor Department's NAFTA Trade Adjustment Assistance program records, Pennsylvania has lost 30,226 jobs at 274 facilities as a result of NAFTA.

"The share of Pennsylvania jobs certified as NAFTA losses under NAFTA-TAA certifications is significantly greater than Pennsylvania's share of the national workforce," Oboler said. Although the layoffs happened throughout Pennsylvania, one in five layoffs occurred in rural areas and were concentrated in the manufacturing sector.

Today's issue of *Lancaster Farming* includes a free booklet to help you sort out the complexities of auction bidding!

Our Dairy Plus Special Technology issue on June 28 focuses on ways producers can use the latest technology to aid them in improving efficiency and expanding the bottom line. Included are reports on a freestall sand separator, robotic milking, and other new items. Also included are a stray voltage update, veterinary reports, cooperative and dairy business news, and a calendar of events.



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