

AG ONE Newsletter

Issue 2018.3 *** March 6, 2018

AG ONE is a periodic newsletter on legislation, regulations and agricultural topics produced by Phillips Associates expressly for the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations (PSCFO), an organization of over 60 organizations sharing an interest in promoting Pennsylvania's Number One industry, Agriculture. Questions or comments should go to PSCFO leadership or to 717/232-9665 or email to xenobun@aol.com. AG ONE Newsletter, PA State Council of Farm Organizations, 26 North Ninth Street, Lemoyne, PA 17043. Material may be cited as long as PSCFO is given appropriate credit.

Dear Reader:

PSCFO and the PA Department of Agriculture finished the series of food safety compliance workshops. Thanks go to the PDA for sponsorship and its presenters, former State Representative Lynn Herman, MidAtlantic Farm Credit and Mid Penn Bank for sponsorships, and to Red Lion Grange, Kutztown Grange, Lewistown Grange (Tamaqua) and the Bedford Grange Mutual Insurance Company for hosting the events. In addition, thanks to PSCFO member groups for promoting and publicizing the workshops to their members. Regards, *Vince Phillips*

PSCFO CONCLUDES FOOD SAFETY WORKSHOPS

On March 1, the last of four workshops was held in Bedford County to inform produce growers on how to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act's regulatory requirements. The other three were held in Tamaqua (Schuylkill County), Kutztown (Berks County), and Windsor (York County). Presenters were from the PA Department of Agriculture who walked growers through areas such as worker safety & hygiene, use of water, risk of animal contamination, and ways to avoid contamination during storage. Statistically, 46% of food sickness incidents requiring medical treatment and/or hospitalization have been traced back to farms.

In addition to farmers, numbers of legislators and staff also attended. Attending were legislators Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski (D-Luzerne), Minority Chair of the House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee, Senator Dave Argall (R-Schuylkill), Reps. Gary Day and Dave Maloney (R-Berks), Rep. Jesse Topper (R-Bedford), and Rep. Carl Walker Metzgar (R-Somerset/Bedford). Staff represented the following legislators: Rep. Judy Ward (R-Blair); Reps. Kristin Phillips-Hill and Rep. Kate Klunk (R-York); Rep. Ryan Mackenzie (R-Lehigh); Senator Wayne Langerholc (R-Cambria/Bedford/Clearfield); and Rep. Stan Saylor (R-York), Majority Chair of the House Appropriations Committee.

DEPARTMENT & COMMODITY MARKETING

The PA Department of Agriculture announced March 3 that the **PA Wine Marketing & Research Program** Board is soliciting proposals on marketing and research projects to increase quality profitability, production and sale of wines. Applications are due April 20, 2018 to PA Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Commodity Board Grant Program, 2301 N. Cameron St., Harrisburg, PA 17110. Details: www.pabulletin.com

March 20, 2018 is the last postmarked date for referendum ballots on continuation of the **PA Vegetable Marketing & Research Program** to be submitted. Eligible voters are vegetable producers who grew at least one acre of vegetables in 2017's growing period or grew vegetables in greenhouses located in PA with total space of 1,000 square feet or more. Voting began March 5.

AG DEPARTMENT PLANS SEVEN REGULATIONS

The PA Department of Agriculture plans to issue seven regulations in the first half of 2018:

- Conservation Easement Program Contact: Douglas Wolfgang 717-783-3167
- PA Preferred Contact: Laura England 717-783-8462
- PA Vegetable Marketing Contact: Bill Troxell 717-694-3596
- Rabies Prevention & Control Contact: Nanette Hanshaw, DVM 717-783-6677
- Kennel Canine Health Contact: Kristin Donmoyer 717-705-8896
- Weights, Standards & Measures Contact: Walt Remmert 717-787-6772
- (Raw) Milk Sanitation Contact: Lydia Johnson 717-787-4315

BUDGET HEARINGS CONCLUDE THIS WEEK

The annual House and Senate Appropriations Committee hearings on the State Budget conclude this week. Of key interest is the Governor's Office and Office of the Budget on March 8 for both House and Senate Appropriations Committees where scrutiny may center on from where the revenue will come to fund the State Budget. PA Cable Network (<https://pcntv.com/schedule/>) airs most of the hearings. Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding testified before both committees. Thanks to the Senate Majority Communications Office, following is a link to the Senate Appropriations hearing on February 28. <https://pasen.wistia.com/medias/h86ncu5jfq> The hearing touched on an array of topics ranging from hemp to the Farm Show lease-lease-back (equity loan).

POLITICS

- Minority House Transportation Committee Chair **Rep. Bill Keller (D-Phila.)** is not seeking re-election. This means that both Majority and Minority Chairs of this committee will be new in 2019.
- **Rep. Ryan Mackenzie (R-Lehigh)** has dropped his congressional plans as did because of the PA Supreme Court imposed redistricting and is running for re-election.
- **Rep. Madeleine Dean (D-Montgomery)** withdrew her bid for the Democratic nomination for Lt. Governor and is now running for Congress in the redrawn 4th congressional district.

PA SPECIAL ELECTION GARNERS NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

- March 13 is the date of the special congressional election in southwest PA's 18th district, pitting PA House Representative Rick Saccone (Republican) against Democrat Conor Lamb. Saccone was elected to the PA House in 2010. Lamb was an attorney with the Marines and former Assistant District Attorney in Pittsburgh during the Obama Administration. This is seen as a referendum on Trump and GOP control of Congress. Notables such as former Vice President Biden and President Trump are actively campaigning in the district.

USDA RENEWS CENSUS REQUEST

Even though the initial deadline was February 6, the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) asks farmers who have not completed the Census of Agriculture to do so. Please respond to www.agcounts.usda.gov or call King Whetstone at 717-787-3904 with questions.

FARM LINK PLANS SUCCESSION WORKSHOP in Chambersburg March 8. The Farm Succession and Transition Workshop will help farmers to pass on the business to the next generation. Farm Link and partner AgChoice Farm Credit are both PSCFO members. Details: Michelle Kirk 717-705-2121 mkirk@pafarmlink.org