

AG ONE Newsletter

Issue 2018.8 ***May 28, 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:

June 1 is right around the corner. For dairy farmers, it also marks the date by which you have had to register for the revised Margin Protection Program for Dairy. Terms are better for producers than previously and enrollment and protection are retroactive back to January 1, 2018. [Margin Protection Program for Dairy \(MPP-Dairy\)](#). For questions, a Pennsylvania contact is Jayne Sebright with The Center for Dairy Excellence 717-346-0849 or 717-817-1376. This is an important opportunity and I hope you will not miss it. *Sincerely, Vince Phillips*

SENATE COMMITTEE MOVES TWO AG BILLS

On May 22, the Senate Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee reported two bills. **Senate Bill 1171** (Brooks-R-Mercer/Warren/Erie/Crawford) replaces the Nutrient Management Advisory Board with a new Farm Animal Advisory Board. Its purpose is to give animal farm operators greater input into environmental regulations. The Senate Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee also moved **Senate Bill 819** (Aument-R-Lancaster). This bill and companion **Senate Bill 820** provide limited immunity from legal action for farmers engaged in agri-tourism. SB 820 may be considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee in early June.

HOUSE VOTES FOR 102 INCH TRAILER WIDTH

On May 24, the PA House voted 171-4 for legislation changing the standard width of truck trailers from eight feet (96 inches) to 8.5 feet (102 inches). The rationale for **Senate Bill 880** (Langerholc-R-Cambria/Bedford/Clearfield) is that the PA standard was set in 1976 and that the newer manufacturing U.S. standard is 102 inches. PennDOT and municipalities will still have the authority to limit truck trailer sizes on specific roadways where a wider width poses a hazard.

STATUS CHECK ON BROADBAND LEGISLATION

- **House Resolution 431** to audit a Dept. of Education Broadband Fund-- Adopted
- **House Resolution 429** to establish a legislative task force to focus on Broadband access -- Reported out of House State Government Committee
- **House Bill 1642** to require a state inventory of structures that could be used to expand Broadband -- House calendar
- **House Resolution 430** to determine if non-rural phone companies are complying with existing law regarding providing access and **House Bill 2320** to increase the state minimum for Broadband access-- House Consumer Affairs Committee
- **House Bill 2293** to prevent "raiding" of dedicated Broadband access monies for other purposes -- House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee
- **Senate Bill 740** to preserve land line telephone service to rural PA-- Senate Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure Committee

DCNR CONVENES FOREST PLAN HEARINGS

The PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) is convening hearings on the State Forest Resource Management Plan. The first two are May 31 at Lock Haven University in Lock Haven and June 13 at the Elk Forest District office in Emporium, PA. Information: <http://www.dcnr.pa.gov>; PaForester@pa.gov

VOCATIONAL BILLS SEE LEGISLATIVE ACTION

A vocational education bill, **House Bill 2205** (Roebuck-D-Phila.), passed the House 191-0 on May 23. It allows establishment of employer advisory committees at the Intermediate Unit level to ensure that industry standards are incorporated in instructional programming. This was a recommendation of the House Select Subcommittee on Technical Education and Career Readiness.

Senate Bill 1104 (Aument-R-Lancaster) passed the Senate 48-1 on May 24. It loosens the 78-hour credit requirements for Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers since they have industry experience. It is now before the House Education Committee.

A package of Career and Technical Education bills was referred to the Senate Education Committee May 18: **House Bill 2155** reforms CTE teacher requirements by emphasizing work experience. **House Bill 2156** provides tax credits to businesses investing in CTE. **House Bill 2157** attempts to speed up classifications of instructional programs including agriculture.

COMING UP...

- **June 1:** Deadline to apply for REAP tax credit program (Resource Enhancement & Protection Program). Details: Joel Semke 717-705-4032
http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/StateConservationCommission/REAP/Pages/default.aspx
- **June 5:** *The House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee is holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 792 (Alloway-R-Franklin). The bill addresses fertilizer labeling requirements.*
- **June 6:** Joint Legislative Budget & Finance Committee releases a report on the feasibility of establishing a water user fee in PA and also an interim report of the Northern PA Regional College which the General Assembly established to provide a community college option for the Northern Tier.
- **June 11:** House State Government is holding a hearing on the Delaware River Basin Commission regulation to ban fracking in parts of northeast PA. In addition to being a forum on the good or ills associated with Marcellus Shale natural gas development, there may be discussion as to whether the Commission has the regulatory authority to overrule state law Act 13 which regulates fracking in all of PA. Of particular interest to some in the Agriculture Community is whether the Commission will at some time decide to restrict DEP-permitted biosolid application despite PA law protecting normal agriculture activities.
- **June 11:** PSCFO Board and Council meeting in room 309 at PDA
- **June 14:** House Game & Fisheries Committee hearing on chronic wasting disease.

CORRECTION: The post-primary issue of AG ONE did not include parts of Berks County as being in the 9th congressional district contest pitting dairy farmer and former PA Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff against former State Treasurer Dan Meuser. The district includes all or parts of Lebanon, Schuylkill, Northumberland, Montour, Columbia, Luzerne, and Carbon Counties **AND Berks County.**