



Pennsylvania
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PA STATE GRANGE TESTIFIES on MILK MARKETING ORDERS

HARRISBURG...The PA State Grange called on the PA Milk Marketing Board (PMMB) to set the over-order premium payment at \$1.00 at its hearing March 8. Testifying on behalf of the Pennsylvania State Grange, Lancaster County dairy farmer Matt Espenshade said that 2018 will be a year that will be talked about for generations to come. Record-setting rainfall affected nearly all of agriculture in Pennsylvania. He said that the almost continuous rain could not have come at a worse time for struggling dairy farmers in the Commonwealth because combined with the lower price for milk it attributed to higher feed costs as well.

In addition to urging adoption of the \$1.00 over-order premium, Espenshade asked policymakers to take a longer view of solving the problems facing the dairy farmer.

“Reducing the financial stress dairy farmers are having involves actions way beyond the authority of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board or any individual farmer to resolve. On one side, it is increasing demand for product. Hopefully, legislation sponsored by PA congressman G.T Thompson allowing whole milk to be provided in school meal programs will help. Actions by USDA to have higher fat content in flavored school lunch milk also help. The main way to turn the market around will be a re-education of the American public that milk is nutritious. Hopefully, we can get a new generation to appreciate milk’s value in promoting their health,” he said.

He also urged Pennsylvania state government to work on building up processing facilities which translates into reduced transportation costs. Espenshade also said that ideally, the Commonwealth could invest in numbers of smaller regionalized processors to promote Pennsylvania’s rural development even as it reduces costs for dairy farmers.

Matt Espenshade is a seventh generation dairy farmer with family ownership dating back to 1867. His farm milks 70 cows with a 19,400

pound rolling herd average. His family farms 260 acres and raises forage and replacement heifers. He is the Master (President) of Elizabethtown Area Grange, number 2076, one of more than 200 local Granges statewide. His farm is a member of Mount Joy Farmers Co-op which is affiliated with Dairy Farmers of America.

PA State Grange was founded in 1873 as an advocate for farmers, families, businesses and communities in rural Pennsylvania.