

COMMENTS FOR BRUBAKER
LISTENING SESSION
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By

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Senator Brubaker, I am Jim Adams, President of Wenger's Feed Mill, Inc, a family-owned agricultural business with headquarters in northwest Lancaster County, a soybean crushing plant, and 5 animal feed manufacturing facilities which make over 1 M tons of feed per year located throughout central Pennsylvania. Our egg production division, Dutchland Farms, produces over 45 M dozens of eggs annually. We employ nearly 300 people and pay over \$12 M in wages; work with hundreds of family farms, and purchase 27 M bushels of corn and 185 K tons of soybean meal annually. As a corporate citizen, we pay \$344 K in local taxes.

Today I also represent The Ag Coalition which is a group of agribusinesses that are concerned about Pennsylvania's competitive economic condition, employee availability, and growth opportunities. Everyday The Ag Coalition members provide wholesome, affordable food for the masses throughout the state, the country, and around the world. Some of those consumers have discretionary income and can afford to purchase whatever they want and others are struggling to get by.

Thank you for this time to share some of our concerns of the number one industry in the commonwealth – Agriculture.

We are concerned about the ability for agriculture to grow and prosper in Pennsylvania. Many companies who work with individual farmers find the permitting process and environmental spider web of regulations overly burdensome for a vibrant agriculture in the state. Pennsylvania competes with neighboring states in maintaining its existing farms and agribusinesses and in attracting new ones. Many people would like to see Lancaster County and Pennsylvania stay in agriculture. To do that, we must keep farmers farming. We must keep families together. We must allow growth opportunities for conscientious farmers and their families. And we must sustain an agribusiness infrastructure that can support the farms.

We are concerned about conflicting laws between the state and townships. We are disturbed by the state's ACRE legislation's inability to reconcile obvious discrepancies between onerous township regulations and the state constitution. We are dismayed by the commonwealth courts' ruling that an ordinance is not illegal if it is not enforced, but it is illegal if it is enforced. Isn't an illegal ordinance an illegal ordinance? We worked closely with the Governor's office, his departmental Secretaries, and both sides of the aisle to craft legislation that would be fair and would allow our own Attorney General to protect the rights of farmers to farm. We need to see that effort come to fruition. It may be beneficial for the legislature to revisit ACRE and see it fulfill its original intent.

We are concerned about agroterrorism and the protection of personal property rights. We applaud the state for the recent passing of more strict trespassing laws when agroterrorism is involved. The protection of the farms is protection of our vulnerable food system. We urge you to provide more agricultural training for humane officers. When they enter an ag facility, whether large or small, they need to understand that the caretaker is concerned for the wellbeing of the animals, but the animals are not pets.

We are concerned about the maze of immigration laws that small businesses must try to navigate. These business leaders want to follow the law, but they are not forgery experts or lawyers. Everyone that wants local foods produced, picked, and processed in Pennsylvania must understand the need for a legal workforce that is willing to do those jobs.

We are concerned about a misguided energy policy that conflicts with food production for our nation. Ethanol production from corn, the staple of our modern food production system, takes food out of the mouths of Americans. Ethanol from waste materials, manure, or switch grass generates clean, renewable energy that compliments a holistic approach to food and energy policy. The synergy in biodiesel production creates both the oil needed for green energy and a highly nutritious feedstuff for animals.

Finally, we are concerned about the efforts to strengthen the right-to-know laws and their possible infringement of personal privacy rights. Farmers and agribusinesses are required by law to participate in numerous data collection systems. To abide by those laws, they often reveal personal information that could be abused if it is not safeguarded. Animal identification regulations not only identify an animal production facility. They also identify the home of the farmer; where their children play, and where they sleep at night. Those people and organizations that wish to do harm to others demand access to this information by the right-to-know, but this information must be protected under the right to privacy.

Thank you, Senator Brubaker, for traveling around the commonwealth and for listening to the concerns and opinions of your constituents. We trust with your qualifications background as you balance the needs of communities, urban sprawl, and a diverse populace that you keep in mind that a healthy business environment helps create the jobs that pay for the food, homes, roads, education, healthcare, and all the other advantages we enjoy as Pennsylvanians.