

Congressional support builds for electronic reporting, DPAC heads south: TN, KY farmers give vote of confidence

By SHERRY BUNTING
Special for Farmshine

DPAC has been on the move during the past two weeks. Here are just a few brief highlights of happenings from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to Bardstown, Kentucky to Cookeville, Tennessee to Washington, D.C... and points in between.

WASHINGTON—The daily electronic reporting letter, co-authored on April 21 by Sen. Arlen Specter (D-PA) and Rep. Tim Holden (D-PA), made its way to the leadership of both the House and Senate Ag Appropriations Subcommittees this week after first garnering signatures from five U.S. Senators and 19 members of Congress from 11 states (Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Maryland, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Colorado).

As reported April 23 in *Farmshine*, the letter specifically supports funding to implement section 1510 of the 2007-08 Farm Bill, which specifically authorizes the more frequent electronic reporting of dairy commodity prices and sales volumes along with quarterly auditing instead of annual auditing.

The letter follows a visit by DPAC with Congressional ag staffers and USDA officials on April 8 in Washington as well as testimony provided by dairy producer and DPAC vice-chair Daniel Brandt, Annville, Pa., during a special U.S. House Ag Committee field hearing on dairy policy in Harrisburg on April 20.

As word traveled about the “dairy pricing letter,” dairy farmers from multiple states in the East, Midwest, and West contacted their legislators seeking support for this appropriations. Even after the letter was sent to the Chair and Ranking Member of both the House and Senate Ag Appropriations Subcommittees, additional members of Congress were reportedly asking to sign on.



DPAC Update
‘Controlling your own destiny’

Kentucky dairy producer Lee Robey (left) and DPAC treasurer Bernie Morrissey discuss the coalition’s efforts during a visit to the 1700-cow dairy between two days of meetings in Kentucky and Tennessee last week, just one day before the flooding began. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of those hard hit areas in that region.
Photo by Sherry Bunting

The appropriations request, in the amount of \$1 million, would enable USDA to implement electronic reporting and quarterly auditing as authorized in the current Farm Bill.

In addition to co-authors Specter and Holden, additional signers as of May 3, 2010 are: Sen. Robert Casey Jr. (D-PA), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper (D-PA-3), Rep. Chris Carney (D-PA-10), Rep. Joe Sestak (D-PA-7), Rep. Todd Platts (R-PA-19), Rep. Joe Pitts (R-PA-16), Rep. Zack Space (D-OH-16), Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT-2), Rep. Betsy Markey (D-CO-4), Rep. Mike Michaud (D-ME-2), Rep. Leonard Boswell (D-IA-3), Louise Slaughter (D-NY-28), Rep. Paul Hodes (D-NH-2), Rep. Peter

Welch (D-VT), Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME-1), Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH-1), Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD-6), Rep. Tom Petri (R-WI-6), Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA-5).

HARRISBURG, Pa.—Members of the DPAC executive board and state issues action group met with State Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi (R) on Wednesday (May 5) to discuss the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Law. Last month, DPAC also received a letter from the State Auditor General Jack Wagner, in response to DPAC’s letter about the ‘stranded’ over-order premiums that are paid by consumers and intended for farmers. Previously on April 1, DPAC met in Harrisburg with Chief Deputy Attorney General Jim Donahue and other members of the State Attorney General’s

staff for an information gathering meeting at their request.

BARDSTOWN, Ky.—The Kentucky Dairy Development Council (KDDC) invited DPAC to speak at their board meeting last Friday (April 30) at the Univ. of Kentucky Extension office in Bardstown. Concerning the funding for electronic reporting, the KDDC and some of its individual members have already contacted their U.S. Senator, Mitch McConnell, who sits on the Senate Ag Appropriations Subcommittee. Bernie Morrissey and Sherry Bunting had a very productive meeting with KDDC, which represents the more than 1000 dairy producers in the Bluegrass State. Two members of the Indiana Professional Dairy Producers also attended to participate in the KDDC / DPAC discussion. The evening prior, we had the opportunity to visit the 1700-cow dairy of Lee Robey, Adairsville, Ky.

COOKEVILLE, Tenn.—The Tennessee Dairy Producers Association (TDPA) also met last week at the Univ. of Tennessee Putnam County Extension office where DPAC was invited to talk about the coalition’s work. Morrissey and Bunting attended the April 29 meeting TDPA is the producer voice representing the Volunteer State’s 480 dairy farms. The TDPA board later voted unanimously to give DPAC their support and said they will contact their Congressman who sits on the Ag Appropriations Subcommittee about the funding for daily electronic reporting. DPAC adhoc member Jack Fritz, who has a 220-cow dairy herd near Springfield, Tenn., was also on hand for the discussion with TDPA.

DPAC also heard recently from producer groups in Georgia and North Carolina.

More details on the exchange of ideas in KY and TN in a future edition of Farmshine.