

Working together

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Special for Farmshine

DPAC Update *'Controlling your own destiny'*

ney Metzler, Martinsburg, Pa.; Jim Kennedy, Butler, Pa.; and Paul Horning, Stevens, Pa. Dean Jackson, Columbia Crossroads, Pa., will participate as well, and the group is identifying additional producers and resource people to participate from other regions of the U.S.

The responsibility and expectations of the supply management action group are to identify all supply management proposals and develop recommendations that complement the milk pricing action group's ideas.

A dairy producer survey—published in last week's *Farmshine* (Feb. 12, 2010) and available online at www.dpac.net—will provide important feedback for both action groups as they move forward on long term policy initiatives with hearings for the 2012 Farm Bill on the not too distant horizon.

Hawbaker encouraged the supply management action group to take an open minded approach and be flexible in looking at this in different ways: For example, by classes versus all milk and by regional versus national.

"We need to understand all the proposals that are out there," said the supply management action group's chairman Jon Jenkins. "I know that there will be four or five different proposals out there by the time of the 2012 Farm Bill, and I would really like to see just one."

Denny Wolff reported on his discussions with the congressional delegation from Pennsylvania and Ohio. "They are looking for something on a list," he said. "They tell me they know there is a problem, but they need to know what dairy-men want to do about it. Having uniformity of one voice is very important."

Wolff said he continues to work on the immediate legislative "asks," which DPAC has

EPHRATA, Pa.—It's been just three months since a meeting of the minds resulted in the official formation of the Dairy Policy Action Coalition (DPAC) in December of 2009. In the past six weeks, the coalition has received correspondence from more than 300 dairy producers in 14 states and donations from more than 100 producers in six states as well as large and small donations from 23 agribusinesses.

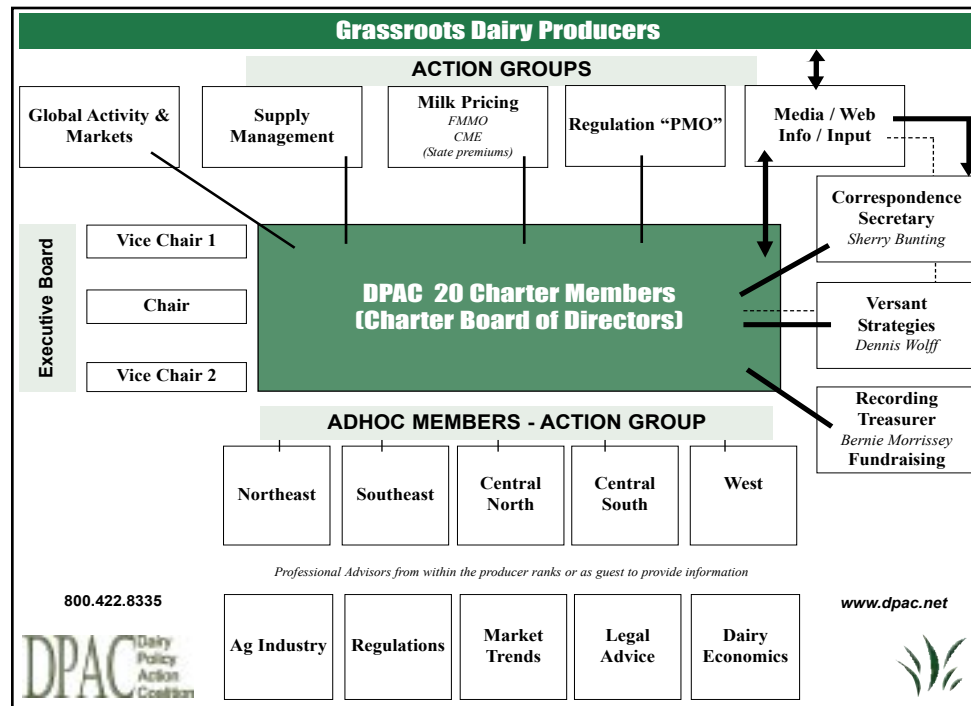
The diagram (right) illustrates DPAC's organizational vision. The board is made up of only dairy farmers and the work is organized by action groups. The professional team assists DPAC in carrying out its mission to actively participate with a unified voice in policies and issues affecting milk pricing.

The DPAC charter board had their fourth meeting last Tuesday, Feb. 9 by conference call, with 17 of the 20 members on the call.

The milk pricing action group, chaired by Rob Barley of Star Rock Farms, Conestoga, Pa., has had one conference call meeting and will have a second meeting next week. They are evaluating proposals and working with government relations consultant Denny Wolff to obtain feedback from economists and other resource people as they plan the board's milk pricing workshop scheduled for March.

Fellow dairy producers can "read what the board is reading" in the "food for thought" section at www.dpac.net. There, visitors will find various items as background material, and more items will be added as other action groups get underway with their work.

During Tuesday's board conference call, chairman Cliff Hawbaker, a Chambersburg, Pa. dairy producer, named the supply management action group. Serving as chairman is Jon Jenkins with the help of vice-chair Gary Kline. Both have dairy farms in Bradford County, Pa. Other members of this action group are Rod-



identified. Topping the list of short term actions is to get a budget number from USDA on the expected costs to implement electronic daily reporting in order to move forward on that section of the 2008 Farm Bill that has not yet been implemented.

"Legislators all seem eager to work on these specific 'asks' for the short term," said Wolff. "They are hungry for good structured suggestions, and we want to help with that."

"Making these contacts is also good for developing into the future for long term dairy policy changes also," added Hawbaker.

Board member Alan Kozak of Clover Patch Dairy, brought news from Holmes County, Ohio, where he is part of the group that has met six times since the big "dairy crisis" meeting on September 28. They met with Wolff to discuss DPAC earlier this month.

"Our group here in Ohio has agreed to align with DPAC," said Kozk. "We're planning a big meeting for hundreds of dairy farmers Feb. 22

(7 to 9 p.m.) at the Mt. Hope Auction Barn (Mt. Hope, Ohio)."

Wolff will be the keynote speaker, and DPAC will be introduced to local dairy farmers in a four-county region. Two producers out there have already gone to the dairy they ship to and asked them to do a penny per hundred-weight deduction every month to send as donations for DPAC's efforts.

This week, members of the board met with Pa. State Senator Mike Brubaker (chair of state senate ag committee) and with U.S. Congressman Tim Holden (chair of U.S. House ag committee). Members of DPAC's state premiums action group sat in with eight of their peers to observe and take notes of Tuesday's Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board hearing.

Dairy farmers are urged to fill out their dairy producer survey questionnaires as printed in *Farmshine* last week and appearing on the web for direct response. The survey responses are needed by March 5.