



Beef Bytes
October 10, 2012

Dear Friends,

Grants are available from the Department of Environmental Protection for educational programming and projects. Grants top at \$7500. For additional information: visit www.dep.state.pa.us or call DEP's Environmental Education and Information Center at 717-772-1828; or email adevine@pa.gov. Application deadline is Dec. 13.

Congratulations to the PA Livestock Association for a successful Keystone International Livestock Exposition. Thanks to the Center for Beef Excellence for their participation in KILE.

The State Grange held its preconference session last week. PA Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Jay Howes, the featured speaker, delivered an update from PDA. Also presenting was PDA food safety specialist Melissa Vacarro who reviewed regulations in respect to serving foods at events such as fairs and charity dinners. The Grange's state conference kicks off Saturday, October 20, in Butler.

Have a good week and best of luck to those in the midst of harvest.

MeeCee

Articles of Interest

- 10-10-2012 [Westmoreland farmers tell state senator about burden of ever-increasing federal and Pa. regulations](#)
The ever-increasing number of federal and state conservation regulations is hurting the livelihoods of Westmoreland County farmers, state Sen. Kim Ward was told on Tuesday. Ward, a Hempfield Township Republican, traveled to Rick Ebert's 400-acre farm along Livermore Road in Derry Township to listen to... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

- 10-09-2012 [USDA - Weekly Crop & Weather Roundup for the Week Ending October 7, 2012](#)
(Press Release)

- 10-09-2012 [2012 Keystone International Livestock Exposition Press Releases for Oct. 5, 2012](#)
(Press Release)

- 10-09-2012 [2012 Keystone International Livestock Exposition Press Releases for Oct. 6, 2012](#)
(Press Release)

- 10-09-2012 [2012 Keystone International Livestock Exposition Press Releases for Oct. 7, 2012](#)

(Press Release)

- 10-09-2012 **[Stink bugs are back](#)**
They're ugly, stinky and a flat-out pain to deal with. The shield-shaped pests commonly known as stink bugs are wreaking havoc here again. After keeping a relatively low profile last year in Lancaster County, stink bugs are back, chomping on crops and sneaking into houses through cracks in... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 10-09-2012 **[Free water tests offered to dairy farms](#)**
NEW CASTLE — Pennsylvania dairy producers have the opportunity to participate in a free Penn State Extension Water Testing program. More than 200 livestock drinking water tests will be given to Pennsylvania dairy producers as part of an extension educational program that encourages... - [New Castle News](#)
- 10-09-2012 **[Tour showcases county farming](#)**
Guests on the 15th annual Butler County Farm Tour, held Saturday, were treated to a brisk autumn day as they learned about beef cattle, crop production, grain milling and white-tailed deer. Stops on the 2012 tour included Hickory Hollow Farm in Parker, Fantasy... - [Butler Eagle](#)
- 10-08-2012 **[A Gloomy Season for Dairy Farmers](#)**
Last week began without a farm bill, a legislative lapse of shameful proportions. Since 1949, the bill has always been renewed, but not this year. Even so, most of the 2012 crop is still covered by loans, insurance programs and commodity supports until the end of the year — with one... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-08-2012 **[State helps farmers buy land](#)**
Lancaster County farmers who want to own the land they farm have been flocking to a state-sponsored loan program this year. So far in 2012, 21 local farmers have applied for and received about \$8.5 million in loans through the Next Generation Farmer Loan Program, which... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 10-07-2012 **[Chesapeake restoration plan challenged in court](#)**
HARRISBURG, Pa. — Lawyers representing farm groups and home builders asked a judge to block a federal plan to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, arguing that it tramples on state's rights and uses erroneous data to set pollution limits... - [AP](#)
- 10-05-2012 **[Inside PDA for October 5, 2012](#)**
(Press Release)
- 10-05-2012 **[DEP Announces Growing Greener Plus Grants Available](#)**
(Press Release)
- 10-05-2012 **[Keystone International Livestock Exposition shows the connection 'between the farm gate and the dinner plate'](#)**
Think of this week's Keystone International Livestock Exposition as a mini-Farm Show, except this expo focuses solely on the animals. It's the largest livestock show on the East Coast, with 1,300 beef cattle, 500 horses, 1,200 sheep and 500 swine from 31 states.... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)
- 10-03-2012 **[Sen. Waugh to be Inducted Into PA Livestock Hall of Fame](#)**
(Press Release)

10-03-2012 [PA Farm Bureau Television Program on Agriculture's New Generation to Air...](#)
(Press Release)

10-03-2012 [Disaster dollars: Farmers may be eligible for financial relief](#)
Farmers in almost every Pennsylvania county, including Cambria, Bedford, Somerset and Westmoreland, will soon be eligible for financial relief if adverse weather conditions severely affected their crop production in 2011. The United States Department of Agriculture recently announced grant funds... - [Johnstown Tribune-Democrat](#)

Legislative Activity

[HB 2371](#) [Maher, John](#) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles) further providing for width of vehicles.

Printer Number(s): [P3532](#) [P3664](#) [P4151](#)

Bill History: 10-15-12 S Set on the Senate Calendar

[HB 2372](#) [Hickernell, David](#) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in general provisions, for defs.; in regis. of vehicles, for exemption; in fees, for farm vehicles; in inspection, for periodic inspection & operation; &, in size, weight & load, for width of vehicles.

Printer Number(s): [P3533](#) [P3665](#) [P4152](#)

Bill History: 10-15-12 S Set on the Senate Calendar

[SB 390](#) [Brubaker, Michael](#) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in size, weight and load, further providing for width of vehicles.

Companions: [SB 1323](#) Brubaker (Refiled from 09R Session)

Printer Number(s): [P0375](#) [P1681](#) [P1793](#) [P2451](#)

Bill History: 10-02-12 H Meeting set for 10:00 a.m., Room G-50, Irvis Office Building ...House Transportation
10-02-12 H Voted favorably from committee as amended House Transportation
10-02-12 H Reported as amended House Transportation
10-02-12 H First consideration
10-02-12 H Laid on the table
10-04-12 H Set on the Tabled Calendar
10-04-12 H Removed from the table
10-15-12 H Set on the House Calendar

[SB 1298](#) [Smucker, Lloyd](#) Amends the Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act further providing for definitions, for roll-back taxes and special circumstances and for appeals.

Printer Number(s): [P1685](#) [P1864](#) [P2410](#)

Bill History: 10-02-12 S Received as amended in Senate and rereferred Senate Rules and Executive Nomination
10-03-12 S Meeting set for Off the Floor, Rules Committee Conference Rooms ...Senate Rules and Executive Nominations
10-03-12 S Re-reported on concurrence as committed Senate Rules and Executive Nominations
10-15-12 S Set on the Senate Calendar

Capitol Review

Well folks, the General Assembly is back in town. You'd think the lobbyists would be happy to have their meal tickets back on the table. Instead, all we've heard is grumbling about the apparently record number of campaign fundraisers being held at area watering holes. Oh well, at least it's a good thing for our restaurateurs and caterers. Yeah, jobs and economic growth!

People like to say that a good compromise is when both sides leave the table unhappy. Commonwealth Court Judge Robert Simpson succeeded in meeting that standard this week with his ruling delaying the implementation of the state's new Voter ID law until the next General Election (after the one coming up on Nov. 6). Neither side was immediately willing to say whether they would appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court or not. Like many others who have been following the voter ID issue, we initially thought the State Supreme Court had punted when it voted to send the Commonwealth Court opinion upholding the new law back for further consideration. Why on earth would the lower court judge change his mind, we wondered.

What was not immediately clear was that the high court had instructed Judge Robert Simpson to look at the case through the lens of a higher standard. In essence, Judge Simpson's initial ruling said it was reasonable to presume that the steps the state intended to take to provide voters with acceptable IDs would not result in disenfranchising voters. The high court instructed him to look not at what the state had intended to do, but at what had actually happened to date.

In retrospect, based on the considerable discrepancy between the number of IDs that had been issued and the number of registered voters who needed them, coupled with the fact that there were only five weeks left to fix things before the election, it appears to many that Judge Simpson's reversal was nearly inevitable under those circumstances.

To be sure, the voter ID decision did not overturn the law, it only delayed its implementation. The judiciary didn't say the law was unfair, only that it was unfair to implement it too quickly. [But it left the door open for additional debate.](#)

The decision leaves us with several observations. First, it was another setback for the "conservative agenda," joining repeal of the state's prevailing wage law and privatization of state liquor stores as unfulfilled objectives.

Second, speculation that the judiciary would be politically sympathetic to the voter ID law proved to be totally off the mark. All three of the Republicans on the Supreme Court voted to send the case back for additional review. Had they voted to uphold the lower court decision, voter ID would have been the law of the land, effective Nov. 6.

What this means for the future of the conservative agenda remains to be seen, but the state pension crisis, the transportation funding crisis and eventually the Turnpike debt crisis are looming on the horizon and are begging for compromise and bipartisanship.

On the national scene, the [first presidential debate went to Mitt Romney by unanimous decision](#). Even President Obama's most ardent supporters expressed disappointment in the president's performance, and Republicans were gleeful with the boost for their candidate.

But before the confetti had settled on the GOP's debate celebration, the September employment numbers came out. To nearly everyone's astonishment, [unemployment fell to 7.8 percent, a 44-month low](#). Obama critics immediately began to stress reasons as to why those numbers might not be as groovy as they appeared, but as a campaign talking point, the employment numbers dulled the memory of the debate debacle. All the more reason why all eyes will be on the next employment report, which will be four days before the election.

The prospect of saving 1,000 jobs brought the PA Coal Alliance and the United Steelworkers together to condemn the Philadelphia Clean Air Council's [efforts to derail the public-private partnership aimed at saving the Philly Sunoco refinery](#). Coal Alliance CEO John Pippy called the Clean Air Council intervention effort "misguided and ultimately harmful to workers and consumers."

A Senate committee took a look at the Harrisburg incinerator fiasco, where witnesses portrayed events as a [perfect storm of bad decisions, loopholes, lack of oversight, poor cost estimates and failure to ensure legal requirements](#). At the end of the day, the city and its residents remain on the hook for around 340 million smackeroonies.

If the bad news of the week is enough to drive you to drink, at least the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board is aiming to make your drive more convenient. An eight-year plan called ["Convenience 2020" would move Wine & Spirits stores closer to supermarkets, especially supermarkets that also sell beer](#). The goal is to get consumers ever-closer to one-stop shopping.

[Dr. Eli Avila, PA health secretary and noted egg-sandwich connoisseur, became a former health secretary this week](#) as he resigned to pursue other interests and spend more time with his family. Besides dealing with immunizations and stuff, his tenure was notable for his dispute with a local restaurateur over the freshness of an egg sandwich, and, later, accusations that he had intervened to block said restaurateur from a state contract. Maybe he was just having a bad day.

But hey, good day or bad day, it's always a great day for America. We say this as a segue to alert our local friends to the appearance this week of comedian Craig Ferguson at the Hershey Theatre. Have a good one yourself!

Other News

10-08-2012

[The risks of eating rice](#)

To eat or not to eat rice, that is the dietary question. Two local professors knowledgeable about arsenic -- levels in food, impacts on health and pervasiveness in the environment -- are weighing in on whether people should eat rice and rice products now that it has been... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

- 10-08-2012 **[Legislature approves Pa.'s capital budget](#)**
HARRISBURG -- State lawmakers gave final approval last week to \$1.68 billion in new borrowing for capital projects, giving a slight boost to the annual charge on state government's figurative credit card. A related measure from House Majority Leader Mike Turzai, R-Bradford Woods,... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-08-2012 **[Freeze, drought take bite out of fall tourism](#)**
INDIANAPOLIS - Devastating spring freezes and a historic drought have stripped some charm from rustic fall destinations, leaving some corn too short to create mazes, orchards virtually devoid of apples and fall colors muted... - [AP](#)
- 10-08-2012 **[U.S. releases estimate of Utica shale reserves](#)**
Drilling companies beginning to explore the Utica shale got a piece of good news when the U.S. Geological Survey estimated the rock formation in Ohio, Pennsylvania and other states holds enormous reserves of natural gas and oil... - [AP](#)
- 10-08-2012 **[Scant Oversight of Drug Maker in Fatal Meningitis Outbreak](#)**
Eddie C. Lovelace, a Kentucky judge still on the bench into his late 70s, had a penchant for reciting Shakespeare from memory and telling funny stories in his big, booming voice. But a car accident last spring left him with severe neck pain, and in July and August he sought spinal injections... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-07-2012 **[Working in America: The myth of men in decline](#)**
Are men fast becoming obsolete? Are women seizing the reins of power in the nation, becoming the major breadwinners and decision-makers? Are women naturally suited for the new economy while old-fashioned males thrash about, clueless? Today, the idea that men are fading and women rising frames the latest... - [Los Angeles Times](#)
- 10-05-2012 **[Facebook tops 1 billion users](#)**
NEW YORK — More than a billion people now log into Facebook each month to check up on old friends, tag photos of new ones and post about politics, religion, cats or what their kids are doing... - [AP](#)
- 10-05-2012 **[Glut of Solar Panels Poses a New Threat to China](#)**
BEIJING — China in recent years established global dominance in renewable energy, its solar panel and wind turbine factories forcing many foreign rivals out of business and its policy makers hailed by environmentalists around the world as visionaries. But now China's strategy is in disarray. Though worldwide demand for... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-03-2012 **[PSU: NSF awards \\$11.9 million for Sustainable Climate Risk Management](#)**
(Press Release)
- 10-03-2012 **[Auto Sales Are Highest in 4 Years](#)**
DETROIT — Unemployment is still high and the so-called fiscal cliff is looming, but those worries didn't slow down the nation's car and truck buyers in September. Autos flew off the lot at the highest sales rate in four years, adjusted for seasonal variations, according to the research firm Autodata.... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-03-2012 **[Pennsylvania voter ID law shouldn't be enforced this time, judge rules](#)**
A Pennsylvania judge on Tuesday ordered state officials not to enforce the commonwealth's tough new voter-ID law in the November election, a political victory for Democrats who say the measure is an attempt to discourage support for President Obama in a battleground state.... - [Washington Post](#)

