



Beef Bytes
September 24, 2013

Dear Friends.

The legislature returned to Harrisburg today for the first day of the fall session. After this week, additional days are as follows: House-September 30, October 1, 2, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, November 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, December 3, 4, 9, 10, 11; Senate-September 30, October 1, 2, 15, 16, 21, 22, November 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, December 3, 4, 9, 10, 11. These dates are subject to change.

Versant had a recent conversation with PA Department of Transportation staff members. The structural safety of Pennsylvania's 25,000 bridges was a main point of conversation. The department hosts an excellent [link](#) which provides a presentation done by Secretary Schoch along with a FAQ sheet on bridge safety and terminology, ratings of bridges and more. The updated site is a response to the recent news that PennDOT would be lowering the weight limits on approximately 1,000 bridges across the Commonwealth. This action could potentially require establishing alternate routes for many PA businesses. Let us know if we can assist with related concerns.

Have a good week and welcome to fall.

Thanks so much.
MeeCee

Articles of Interest

CBE News

The PA Center for Beef Excellence is proud to support Pennsylvania cattle producers at the 2013 Keystone International Livestock Expo. One event that is always popular is the Keystone Barbeque Contest, featuring a variety of divisions for chefs to show off their cooking skills with meats produced right in Pennsylvania. Be sure to check it out!

Pennsylvania News:

[Keystone International Livestock Expo](#)

The 2013 Keystone International Livestock Exposition is set to run September 28-October 6 at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg. Exhibitors from around the country will show cattle, hogs, lambs and horses. Saturday, October 5 will include sales for both purebred heifers and show calves.

National News:

[Farm Income Trends](#)

A report from the US Department of Agriculture shows that 9 out of 10 farm families derive some income from off-farm employment. Common areas of employment are management or professional positions, as well as office support and sales. Spouses of farm managers often hold positions in healthcare or education.

[Chipotle Marketing](#)

Agricultural advocates are upset by the most recent commercial produced by Chipotle, claiming that it presents an unfair depiction of modern agriculture. The company claims that the ad educates consumers about production and it has been praised by marketers. However, the unfortunate misinformation provided paints producers in a terrible light.

[E. coli Control](#)

Research suggests that the use of an E. coli vaccine in cattle could reduce the number of cases of human infection from beef products. This is because the vaccine targets the area responsible for the shedding of the bacteria. However, vaccines are currently underused due to a poor understanding of their importance and economic factors.

Global News:

[Antibiotics in the UK](#)

The United Kingdom has drafted a plan to address antibiotic resistance in the country. The authors note that the biggest problems with resistance come from the use of antimicrobials in human medicine, but agriculture is included in the management plan. The focus is on education, stewardship of current drugs and development of new treatments.

Cattle Management Articles:

[Fall Calves](#)

Producers with fall calves should be aware of the dangers that biting flies can pose for newborns. Flies can congregate on calves and bite until the hide is removed and flesh is exposed. A good cow will clean the calf completely after birth to avoid attracting flies, but if a calf is attacked by flies a good fly spray will help to get rid of them.

[Marketing Calves](#)

There are several management procedures that can increase calf value at the sale barn. These include castration and dehorning, as well as marketing cattle in bigger lots. Buyers pay more for thinner cattle with less fill, and a black hide still brings a premium. Small framed cattle are often discounted unfairly, and may be good candidates for retained ownership.

[Heifer Development](#)

Research shows that 'conventional' heifer development protocols can be improved. Heifers can breed successfully at only 50-55% of mature body weight, and those that have some feed restriction early in life often have better long term stayability in the herd. It is expensive to develop heifers too fast when those grown slower perform just as well.

[Marketing Co-ops](#)

For producers wanting to capture premiums from marketing large lots of cattle, joining a marketing co-op could be one solution. These groups are formed to allow many producers to pool cattle and market them as a large group. Members are expected to use the same preconditioning programs and profits are distributed based on number of calves submitted.

[Forage Impacts Beef](#)

A study at Clemson University showed that the type of forage used to finish cattle can have a huge impact on the final product. Cattle grazed on different forages showed variation in performance, carcass quality and even nutritional profiles in the beef. This research is a start to understanding alternatives to finishing cattle on corn.

- 09-23-2013 **[Standardize food labels](#)**
Americans throw away about 40 percent of the food they buy every year, at a cost of about \$165 billion. Most of that food is wasted, according to researchers at Harvard University and the Natural Resources Defense Council, because of misleading, inconsistent labeling that is misconstrued... - [Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald](#)
- 09-22-2013 **[Invasive beetles found in rice at Pittsburgh airport](#)**
Customs agents discovered one of the world's most destructive pests in a bag of rice in Pittsburgh International Airport, officials said on Friday. "The Khapra beetle is one of the most invasive insects (Customs and Border Protection) agriculture specialists can encounter," said Joseph... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-20-2013 **[Inside PDA for September 20, 2013](#)**
(Press Release)
- 09-20-2013 **[PA Farm Bureau Disappointed with Court Decision Challenging EPA's Authority...](#)**
(Press Release)
- 09-20-2013 **[Misgivings About How a Weed Killer Affects the Soil](#)**
ALTON, Iowa — The puny, yellow corn stalks stand like weary sentries on one boundary of Dennis Von Arb's field here. On a windy day this spring, his neighbor sprayed glyphosate on his fields, and some of the herbicide blew onto Mr. Von Arb's conventionally grown corn, killing... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-19-2013 **[Drones are the latest idea to improve farm productivity](#)**
LONDON, Ohio — Farmers who looked up at this year's Farm Science Review got a peek at their future. Ohio State University doctoral student Matt McCrink, who studies mechanical and aerospace engineering, demonstrated his dissertation project — an unmanned aerial vehicle, better known as a drone. Farmers one day could use... - [Columbus Dispatch](#)
- 09-17-2013 **[PA Farmers Face Hardships from Weight Restrictions on Bridges; Support...](#)**
(Press Release)
- 09-17-2013 **[PDA: Keystone International Livestock Expo to Feature New Events, Showcase...](#)**
(Press Release)
- 09-17-2013 **[Geisinger study links infection to pig manure](#)**
DANVILLE — Research done at Geisinger has established a link between pig manure spread on farm fields and the skin infection commonly known as MRSA. The study, published Monday, was the first to examine the association between high-density livestock operations, fields treated with manure and... - [Bloomsburg Press Enterprise](#)

Legislative Activity

[HB 397](#) [Keller, Mark](#)

(PN 1942) The Agritourism Immunity Act provides for limited immunity from personal injury with inherent risks for persons that sponsor farm-related tourism activities if: (1) The person is an operator of an agritourism activity; and (2) The notice regarding immunity is conspicuously posted in at least two locations on the premises. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer Number: 407)

Companions: [HB 1435](#) Keller, Mark (Refiled from 11R Session)
[SB 395](#) Brubaker, Michael (Refiled from 11R Session)
[HCO 709](#) Keller, Mark (M)
1-14-13 H Filed
[SB 581](#) Brubaker, Michael (Related)
3- 1-13 S Introduced and referred to committee on Senate Judiciary

Printer Number(s): [P0407](#) [P1942](#)

Bill History: 09-23-13 H Reported as committed from House Rules
09-23-13 H Laid on the table
09-24-13 H Set on the Tabled Calendar

[HB 1523](#) [Toepel, Marcy](#)

(PN 2030) Amends "An act authorizing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the local government units thereof to preserve, acquire or hold land for open space uses" adding that revenue from the tax levy may be used for expenses necessary to prepare the resource, recreation or land use plan; and for costs associated with design, engineering, improvement and development of the real property consistent with the approved resource, recreation or land use plan. Effective immediately.

Companions: [HCO 594](#) Toepel, Marcy (M)
1-10-13 H Filed

Printer Number(s): [P2030](#)

Bill History: 09-23-13 H Reported as committed from House Rules
09-23-13 H Laid on the table
09-24-13 H Set on the Tabled Calendar

[SB 638](#) [Vogel, Jr., Elder](#)

(PN 1309) Amends Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) to provide for a tax exemption for certain agricultural structures so long as certain enumerated conditions are met. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer Number: 693, 996)

Companions: [SCO 604](#) Vogel, Jr., Elder (M)
1-29-13 S Filed

Printer Number(s): [P0693](#) [P0996](#) [P1309](#)

Bill History: 09-24-13 H Set on the House Calendar

Capitol Review

The weekly wrap comes to you live this week from southern California, under the blue skies of a blue state! For the purposes of balance, we shall make every attempt to compose a weekly wrap from Alabama sometime in the near future. Having said that, let's get a move on!

Because they apparently have nothing better to do, the U.S. House voted to whack \$40 billion a year from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (son of food stamps). The U.S. Senate had already passed a plan to trim back the program, but the House's appetite for the SNAP program still continues to be non-existent. This episode was wonderful news for everyone who was hopeful that Congress would somehow not implode over raising the debt ceiling later this year, or avoid a total meltdown over de-funding Obamacare. You have a better chance of getting a pony for Christmas.

Back in wild, wonderful Pennsylvania this week, it was all about Governor Corbett versus the feds, as he unveiled his new [Healthy Pennsylvania health care plan](#), which would add Pennsylvania to the list of states opting in to expanded Medicaid under Obamacare. Despite the fact that Corbett's plan includes some of his long-sought reforms to the system, it did not endear him to the more...ahem...conservative folks in his party. And we are not sure his reforms will be met with open arms by the feds, either, as work requirements and private insurance coverage are ideas that they have already rejected in some form in other states. So, in summation: To his left, the governor has a nice, big rock; to the right, a hard place.

Corbett is also facing a pretty steep uphill climb with those less-than-flexible feds as he [pledges to keep and expand the Children's Health Insurance Program](#). The feds, you see, would like a chunk of those kiddies moved into Medicaid, so they have already pretty much said "no go". Undaunted, Corbett is pledging a fight. Seems to us that something as crucial as providing health care to the wee ones shouldn't ever have to become a political war.

Almost 900,000 Pennsylvanians will qualify for some level of premium assistance under Obamacare when the health insurance exchanges open in two weeks. The cool part about that is, unlike tax credits, [you get the assistance when you buy the coverage](#) -- a health care coupon, if you will -- instead of waiting to somehow wrench it out of the hands of the IRS at tax time.

Speaking of the wee ones, the PA Health Department is [raising the red flag on e-cigarettes](#), which are being enjoyed by teens at a pretty startling rate. On one hand, that practice seems to be better than the alternative. But we suppose there is an argument for not raising an entire generation of children who breathe water vapor on each other.

[Nearly 2 million direct care workers will be given minimum wage and overtime protection](#) starting next year, thanks to a new ruling by the U.S. Department of Labor. And it's about time! Really? It has taken this long for the folks who routinely do one of the toughest jobs ON THE PLANET to be protected from unfair labor practices? Better late than never, we suppose!

A Philadelphia City Council panel has passed a [proposed change to Philadelphia's City Charter](#) which would mandate a minimum wage of at least 150 percent of the federal minimum for all city-funded contracts and subcontractors. Business owners will likely not be pleased by this development. Employees, however, might just be able to use the new "windfall" to buy things like groceries, or pay rent, so maybe that will ease the pain of opponents.

[Gun advocates are rallying up in Erie](#) against a plan to ban guns in city parks because nothing says anarchy like not being able to carry a weapon in a park.

In the meantime, [Starbucks is trying to split the baby when it comes to allowing its customers to pack heat](#) when getting their morning Joe. Hey, we are not banning firearms in our cafes, but we would just really, really appreciate it if you wouldn't bring them inside our stores. Please and thank you.

[A new statewide campaign is being launched to combat domestic violence and sexual abuse.](#)

No More PA is an extension of the work already being done by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Check out the link and get involved!

Pennsylvania's distressed municipalities may see [some stark new changes to the state's Act 47 law](#), which is designed to provide a way out of the weeds, fiscally-speaking. The problem with the current law is that there are precious few revenue options to help cities regain their financial footing, and there is no deadline for exiting Act 47 once you enter, making it the Hotel California of laws. Check out anytime you like, but you can never leave (Hey, Pittsburgh, didn't see you standing there!)

U.S. Senator Bob Casey is proving yet again that he is sane and practical, something that seems to be in rather short order down in the Federal City. [Casey was in Philly this week, urging his colleagues to fully fund the nation's transportation infrastructure](#), perhaps by raising the gas tax, which hasn't been raised since 1993. If you recall, that tax was supposed to destroy the economy and cause a black hole to swallow the earth.

Finally this week, [the push may be back on to do some sort of public pension reform in Harrisburg](#), since the two state pension systems reportedly have \$47 billion in unfunded liabilities. The answer that some folks have settled upon is to move new state employees into a defined contribution system, like a 401(K). It should be noted that if lawmakers make that proposed change, the new projected unfunded liability will be \$47 billion. Which means that lawmakers will have voted for something that does not fix the problem, and will hence need to return to vote for something that does. Clear? Neither are we, we just report the news around here. Have a great week!

In Other News

09-23-2013 [Stateline: States Move Ahead With Food Stamp Cuts](#)
(Press Release)

09-23-2013 [Alcohol breath tester blends into bar decor](#)
Inside downtown Lancaster's Federal Taphouse, next to an elevator, stands what looks like an old-fashioned telephone. A vertical wooden box, it boasts a retro handset, a pair of bells and a rotary dial. But no one is making phone calls on this

throwback. The only call a bar patron can make is whether there should be a last call... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

- 09-23-2013 **[Bus tour again tackles Pa. property tax reform](#)**
Like a group of rock stars on tour, taxpayer activists who plan to travel to Harrisburg Tuesday are calling themselves the "Fill-a-Bus Tour II," the latest traveling show to promote property tax reform. "Either they hear us in September, or fear us in November," said... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)
- 09-23-2013 **[The epidemic of childhood obesity](#)**
Everywhere you go today, chances are that you will see a child that is suffering from obesity. The problem is that poor health at a young age can lead to poor health and eating habits for life. The CDC states that from 1976-1980, children ages two to five had an increase of obesity from 5... - [Lansdale Reporter](#)
- 09-22-2013 **[Biometric Technology Takes Off](#)**
The use of biological markers like fingerprints, faces and irises to identify people is rapidly moving from science fiction to reality. Apple's latest iPhone, which went on sale this week, can be unlocked with a fingerprint. Users of Android smartphones can unlock their devices... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-22-2013 **[Corbett nominates secretaries to serve environmental agencies](#)**
HARRISBURG -- Two acting secretaries of state environmental agencies have been nominated by Gov. Tom Corbett to serve as secretaries. Mr. Corbett on Friday nominated Ellen Ferretti of Luzerne County as secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and E.... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-22-2013 **[1.7 million in Pa. brace for food stamp reform](#)**
A slate of proposed changes in how food stamp benefits are calculated and a tightening of states' flexibility in running the programs could impact more than a million Pennsylvanians receiving the assistance. The changes are part of a measure approved by the U.S. House on Thursday... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-22-2013 **[Lawmakers get back to work: It's a tossup whether liquor reform will get another shot](#)**
Pennsylvania lawmakers return to work Monday after a nearly three-month break. This is one of five stories on the business they left undone in the spring, and what's likely to be on their agenda this fall. Liquor privatization Where it was left: The House took the historic step of passing a plan that... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)
- 09-19-2013 **[Meet Pennsylvania's newest billionaire](#)**
Pennsylvania has a new billionaire on an annual list published by Forbes magazine. He is Michael Rubin of Bryn Mawr, who made his fortune, valued at \$2.3 billion, through online retailing. Forbes ranked him No. 243 on its list of the 400 richest Americans, published this week.... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-19-2013 **[Gas prices are falling and expected to fall more between now and Halloween](#)**
GasBuddy senior petroleum analyst Patrick DeHaan – judging by gas price trends over the last five years, is expecting gas prices to decrease by Halloween by between 20 cents and 25 cents. "From Sept 19 to Halloween, the U.S. average price has fallen by an average of 28 cents per gallon over the past five years. But, we're... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)

- 09-18-2013 [**Pa. farmers face hardships**](#)
The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau says moving food from the farm to the supermarket, processor and the feed mill is becoming more difficult and costly for farmers across Pennsylvania due to a deteriorating road and bridge system. Despite the likelihood of higher user fees or taxes, farmers are urging the... - [Lock Haven Express](#)
- 09-18-2013 [**Summer vacation over, lawmakers settle in for a busy fall: John L. Micek**](#)
Glen Grell offered little more than a shrug and a laugh when he was asked what he expected as state lawmakers wrap up the world's longest summer vacation and finally return to voting sessions on Monday. "I guess we'll find out," Grell, a Republican state House... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)
- 09-17-2013 [**Pa. governor sends Medicaid plan, demands to feds**](#)
HARRISBURG, Pa. — Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett became the 10th Republican governor Monday to support accepting federal Medicaid expansion dollars to insure hundreds of thousands of working poor, although it remained to be seen how the Obama administration will respond to a list of... - [AP](#)
- 09-17-2013 [**Troy councilwoman to testify on Prevailing Wage**](#)
TROY - Troy Borough Council on Monday evening joined for the call for Prevailing Wage reform and passed a Prevailing Wage resolution. Borough manager Dan Close said the resolution "just shows that this municipality supports some type of reform to Prevailing Wage."... - [Towanda Daily Review](#)