

Highlights of 3rd Listening Session

Lebanon, PA

December 6, 2018

The PMMB held its 3rd Listening Session on December 6th in Lebanon, PA. There were approximately 35 attendees, which included several members of the PA Assembly and several representatives of Assembly members, farmers, business persons, and PMMB and staff.

Discussions focused on several items that have been raised at the previous listening sessions:

- Milk in schools
- Over Order Premium distribution
- Out-of-state competition

State Representative John Lawrence, a member of the House Ag and Rural Affairs Committee, presented the Board with a concept paper outlining his views on the need for transparency in reporting Over Order Premium to farmers by cooperatives. This issue has been a source of controversy for several years and the Board will review Rep. Lawrence's recommendations.

Two other items were brought to the attention of the Board by attendees at the meeting; these were not previously addressed at Listening Sessions and the Board is ready to address each.

1. Slow Response in Addressing Issues. The Board recognizes that it can provide some leadership in this area and has proposed the formation of a *Rapid Response Team* which could hasten regulatory reviews and approvals. The team would ideally consist of individuals who were in decision-making positions in relevant state agencies and would pull in appropriate local individuals as each problem is presented. This idea was communicated to Agriculture Secretary Redding in September, and a concept paper sent to him and Representatives Mark Keller and John Lawrence in December; copies have also been provided to staff members of Senate and House Ag and Rural Affairs Committees.
2. Lack of Coordination Between Entities Discussing Dairy Industry Issues. The Rapid Response document that has been circulated mentions compiling all the information or recommendations from the various groups that have been involved in dairy discussions.

As part of overall discussions, the Board also shared that a survey is being planned that will gather valuable information from dairy farmers regarding two big issues – Over Order Premium and minimum pricing regulations. Survey Monkey has been ordered, the research questions formulated, and the questionnaire development is to begin within the next few weeks. We plan to partner with an organization to access its membership database for survey distribution.