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Magazine Ranks Moul in Agriculture's Top 100

By Rep. Dan Moul (R-Adams)

As chairman of the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, I was recently ranked 16th among Pennsylvania agriculture influencers in City & State PA magazine's **2022 Agriculture Power 100**. It is an honor to chair this important committee and have my finger on the pulse of an industry that feeds Pennsylvania, supports more than 593,000 jobs and contributes nearly \$133 billion annually to the state's economy.

Since becoming chairman, I have worked closely with my colleagues in the House and our Senate counterparts to advance legislation to strengthen our agriculture industry by making laws that help farmers and ensuring state regulations make sense and are not unduly burdensome. I have also voted to approve measures that provide Pennsylvania farmers with the financial grants and incentives they need to thrive and be successful.

I work closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and industry stakeholders on issues before my committee. These relationships and our on-going communication help us to more quickly respond to animal disease outbreaks and pests that threaten crops, and crucial agriculture-related legislation making its way through the General Assembly.

I recently successfully amended legislation that became **Act 91 of 2022** to permit commercial farm vehicles of a certain size and weight to travel on limited access highways under certain conditions. In Adams County, this means commercial sprayers that can reach speeds of at least 40 MPH, are now permitted on sections of Route 15 and can avoid having to travel through Gettysburg and other small towns.

I also shepherded **Act 83 of 2022** through my committee. It aims to protect Pennsylvania's rivers and streams and the Chesapeake Bay by setting clear standards for the labeling and application of fertilizer to turf in residential settings, golf courses and athletic fields.

Acid mine drainage has polluted many Pennsylvania creeks and streams, turning them orange and rendering them unable to support aquatic life. I recently traveled to St. Marys in Elk County, where the Pennsylvania Game Commission is working on a solution. It is introducing lime into affected streams, which is neutralizing the acid and may ultimately restore the streams to PH levels that will allow for re-stocking.

Finally, I moved **Act 74 of 2022**, which clarifies state law governing the purchase and use of consumer fireworks while designating that the full amount of the 12% tax on the retail sale of consumer fireworks goes to EMS and firefighter first responder programs, including tuition/loan forgiveness, training, and grants for training centers.

Bills recently passed out of my committee that are still awaiting action in the state Senate would help Pennsylvania dairy farmers by putting whole and reduced fat milk back on the school lunch menu and would establish Keystone Opportunity Dairy Zones to incentivize the development of additional dairy processing capacity.

I voted for this year's state budget, which makes significant investments in agriculture, the environment and other initiatives of interest in Adams County and across the Commonwealth. It allocates \$25 million in direct industry support to assist poultry farmers whose flocks have been impacted by Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and to provide additional support for affected allied industries. It allocated \$6 million more to Pennsylvania's animal diagnostic laboratory system to pay for costs associated with the enormous amount of additional testing required to combat and mitigate the outbreak, as well as another \$4 million to build laboratory capacity for future animal disease threats.

The budget also provides funding to combat spotted lanternflies, conduct agriculture and hardwoods research and marketing, and for Penn State's Agricultural Extension. It funds a clean streams initiative to help prevent nutrient and sediment pollution, supports grants for water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure projects and to improve nutrient management, flood control, permitting, and other conservation-related projects. Finally, an allocation of \$156 million will establish a program to support the rehabilitation, repair, and development of parks and forest in the Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania leads the nation in the production and exportation of hardwood lumber, an industry that produces over \$36 billion annually in total economic impact and employs about 64,000 Pennsylvanians. I recently traveled to Pennsylvania's Northern Tier to tour some of our Commonwealth's most prized hardwood forests to learn more about how this important commodity is grown, maintained and harvested. I also learned about invasive plants and weeds that can interfere with healthy tree growth; the importance of selective cutting to ensure robust and sustainable forests; and challenges such as available funding, workforce and climate issues that can have a detrimental impact on industry growth.

While I have been an active member of the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee since my election to the House 15 years ago, chairing the committee has enabled me to be immersed in all things agriculture. It has given me a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complexities that shape our state's No. 1 industry and our mutual dependence on a clean and healthy environment.

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