

Pa. Farm Bureau urges Legislature to pass biodiesel bills

By Jim T. Ryan

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The **Pennsylvania Farm Bureau** today urged the Legislature and governor to pass and sign bills that will help farmers and the state's floundering biodiesel industry.

"If it turns out that the governor and the General Assembly can't agree on all of the energy initiatives, let's hope they can agree to pass the initiatives they do agree on," said Carl T. Shaffer, president of the farm bureau, which represents more than 42,500 farms in the state.

The organization held a press conference at the capitol in Harrisburg as part of its legislative conference. Farm organizations and agricultural business leaders are meeting today with legislators to discuss the state budget and agricultural policies.

Shaffer was joined by state Rep. David Kessler (D- Berks County) and Sen. Michael Brubaker (R-Lancaster County). Brubaker is head of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee. Kessler introduced biodiesel legislation in the House.

The House and Senate are negotiating a final compromise bill that will offer subsidies to biodiesel producers, Brubaker said. An announcement on those efforts could come within the next several weeks, he said.

The difference is 25 cents between the House and Senate versions of a subsidy bill. The **House** wants to offer biodiesel producers \$1 per gallon and the **Senate** is offering 75 cents, according to the bills.

Keystone Biofuels Inc. President Ben Wootton and farmer Keith Oellig joined the others at the press conference. Wootton, whose company is based in Hampden Township, Cumberland County, worked with legislators to get bills passed to help biodiesel producers.

Oellig farms 600 acres in East Hanover Township, Dauphin County.