

Berks County Ag Expo a big success

By DIETER KRIEG
 READING — The first ever Berks County Agricultural Exposition, held at the Berkshire Mall last week, was a tremendous success, according to Mrs. Robert Kopfer, who was involved with the affair on a daily basis.

The Fleetwood area dairy farm wife commented: "We'll definitely want to be coming back. With no Reading Fair this year, this Expo was our biggest touch with the city."

The Agricultural Exposition featured farm product displays as well as fun and games for young and old alike. In previous years the emphasis had been strictly on milk, since June is Dairy Month. This year, however, organizers decided to bring all phases of agriculture into the shopping center.

Organizers of the 6-day long event called it the first and largest indoor agricultural show in the area. Representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture called it a positive step towards promoting Pennsylvania's farm products. Agriculture Department Secretary Penrose Hallowell and his deputy, Chester Heim, were both on hand to observe and offer congratulatory remarks.

The big event came to a conclusion last Saturday night with the crowning of the 1979 Berks County Dairy Princess. (See article on that elsewhere in this issue.)

"Children especially liked the hatched chick display," said Mrs. Kopfer. The ladies were impressed with crafts, particularly the quilts that were made and later given away to lucky contest entrants.

In his remarks during a dinner marking the beginning of Berks County Agriculture Week, Deputy Agriculture Secretary Chet Heim emphasized that Pennsylvanians need to become totally aware that agriculture keeps the state growing. He congratulated Berks County groups and individuals for their efforts.

In a question and answer session following the dinner, Heim said he believed it would be more economical for Pennsylvania to keep the present Farm Show Building. He said it could be improved and maintained for less than a third of the money it would take to build a new complex. A new building, while desirable, is impractical at this time, he said.

Asked about a milk marketing security fund, the deputy secretary revealed

that the Department is proposing the fund be contributed to by both dairymen and dealers.

On farmland preservation, Heim noted that legislation is being proposed and worked on, but no final action on the matter is expected this year.

Tuberculosis and brucellosis are on the rise in Pennsylvania, according to Heim, who is encouraging preventive measures such as vaccinations. "We thought we were home free, but we got a little careless. It's a lot more practical to spend time and money on prevention rather than on indemnity programs. It's not just good economics, it's also good public relations," he exclaimed.

Heim noted that agriculture is Pennsylvania's second largest industry. He'd like to see more of the kind of efforts that were displayed here at the Berkshire Mall last week.

Among the farm leaders who helped to develop the Berks County Agricultural Expo were Donald Duncan, dairy farmer and show chairman; Jack Kooker, president of the Berks County Farmers Association; Feryl Treichler, master of the Berks County Pomona Grange No. 43; and James Haldeman, senior agriculture agent from the Berks County Extension Service.

More than a dozen farm organizations, commodity groups, and related agencies took part in the promotional and educational activities.



Many visitors to the Berks County Agricultural Exposition found the chick display fascinating.

Time for farmland assessment sign-ups

FLEMINGTON, N.J. - August 1 is absolute deadline for filing farmland assessment application with the tax assessor. Forms are available from him. If one has been on FLA, he will get your forms in the mail. If applying for the first time, one had better call him for the form.

The August 1 deadline date is critical. No extensions are possible for filing beyond that date.

If one has any questions, he should contact his assessor first. He's the

"administrator" of the program in your municipality.

Other questions? In New Jersey, call John VanZandt, Coordinator for Rural Resource Services, New Jersey Dept. of Agriculture, 609-292-5511, or call the Hunterdon County Extension Service, 201-788-1338.

Bob Schutzki, County Agricultural Agent, will again be scheduling a number of Farmland Assessment Workshops. Dates and times will be announced.



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