

## FFA displays at East Towne Mall

East Towne Mall is cooperating with Lancaster County Future Farmers of America Chapters, Wednesday through Friday, for a special Harvest Week.

Of particular interest will be a duck slide and a baby barnyard and Lancaster County farm animals. Also on hand will be the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Agri-Animals and the Country Store.

The main feature of the show will be the farm windows for a peek at what today's modern farmer must know. For example, Ephrata's FFA Chapter presents a display on

pesticide safety called Pesticide Precaution. Manheim's FFA expounds raising bunnies for money.

Elizabethtown's FFA explores the changes in agriculture showing what one hour's wage bought in 1950 as compared to what the same hour's wage bought in 1979. Penn Manor's FFA compares the cost of drying feed corn with solar energy vs. the conventional method.

Elanco's FFA declares that Lancaster County nourishes the nation showing input and output of agricultural products. Pequea Valley's FFA theme is fall harvest

safety and Lampeter/Strasburg and Warwick team up with a display of bee keeping equipment and honey with honey samples and honey for sale.

In addition to the farm windows giving a pretty good picture of the farm scene, there will be an information booth to answer questions. On hand will also be the county dairy and poultry princesses and the State FFA president, Doug Hershberger.

Capon judging is scheduled at 6 p.m. on Friday, with an auction to begin at 7 p.m.

## Agronomy winners



Elizabethtown FFA swept all of the top placings in the Lancaster County agronomy contest on November 5. Members of the first-place E-Town team include, front to rear, Tracey Stowe, Tim Albright, Randy Greenly, and Kevin Noll. Other teams placings were E-Town B Team, second; Manheim A, third; Pequea Valley, fourth; Manheim B, fifth; and New Holland A, sixth. The top 10 individual placings: Noll, 1; Greenly, 2; Stowe, 3; Gail Ginder, Manheim, 4; Kim Erickson, E-Town, 5; Albright, 6; Ken Ruhl, E-Town, 7; Mike Pflieger, Manheim, 6; Eric Warner, Pequea Valley, 9; and Jon Watz, Manheim, 10.

## Best pastures start at top

COLUMBIA, Mo. — To get the most from pastures and the most efficient use of fertilizers, don't fertilize the soil. Feed the plants.

That means taking soil tests in the top three inches — not the top seven — when testing soils of permanent pastures.

It means topdressing to most efficiently supply nutrients to permanent, nonrotation pasture land, claims Earl Kroth, University of Missouri-Columbia soil scientist.

Kroth and his colleagues have spent more than 20 years studying the nutrient needs of tall fescue and reed canary-grass when used for pastures in Missouri. Their aim: average annual production of three tons an acre to be grazed without a complicated rotation system.

What they found is that excess phosphate and potash have a tendency to accumulate in the upper one to two inches of the soil. So, if farmers took soil tests to depths of seven inches, the tests show they needed more phosphate and potash than they actually did. The scientists also identified the

phenomenon of "luxury consumption." In other words, if farmers put on more phosphate and potash than their forages needed the forages would use up the excess but would not increase yields accordingly.

"From all of our research, we are confident that topdressing is an efficient method of supplying nutrients to forage crops," Kroth said.

"Additional studies may indicate when it is best to apply phosphate and potash, spring or fall."

UMC studies indicate that split applications of 160 pounds of nitrogen per year produce optimum yields of tall fescue and reed canarygrass. Recent trials show that one of those 80-pound applications should be made in August; the other in May instead of December or March.

"The studies further showed that 30 pounds of phosphate per acre per year is a practical rate where forage is removed," Kroth said. "But if this pasture is just grazed, annual applications may not be necessary. That's because the nutrient is recycled and made

available to the plants due to decomposition of manure and ungrazed plant parts.

"On eroded Shelby soil, we found that we needed annual applications of 50 pounds of potash in combination with 30 pounds of phosphate to produce an optimum yield of three tons of tall fescue hay per acre.

"All of our studies emphasize the need for soil testing — especially the top three inches of permanent pastures — to make most efficient use of expensive phosphate and potash.

"Then we recommend topdressing to 'feed' the plants, not 'fertilize' the soil."

More information on fertilizing pastures is available from area extension agronomists, livestock specialists, farm management specialists or from district soil conservationists. They have copies of Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 1039: "Topdressing Nitrogen. Phosphorous and Potassium on Cool Season Grasses for Pasture Production," by Kroth and Louis Meinke.

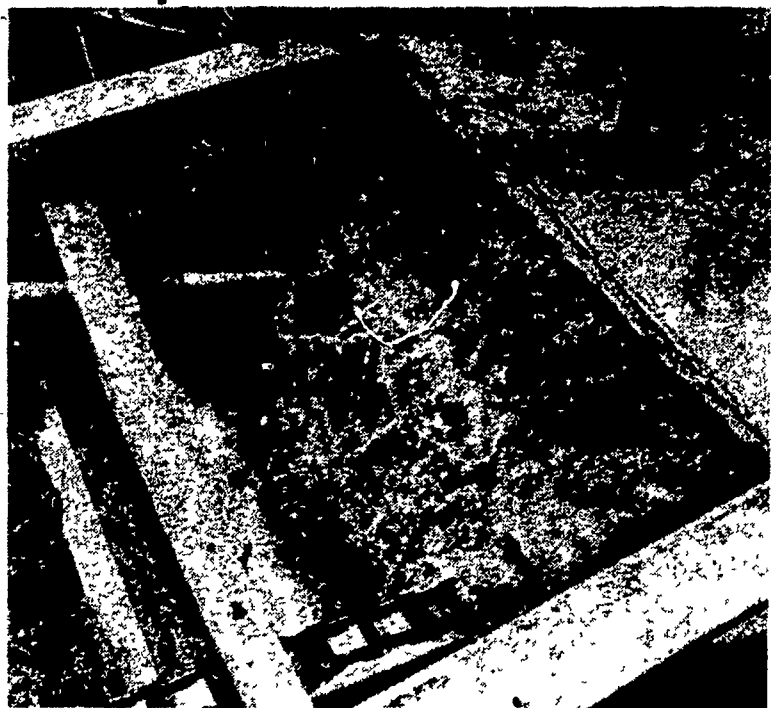
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