

Hunterdon Co., N.J. ag study underway

FLEMINGTON, N.J. — A comprehensive study of Hunterdon County's agriculture is continuing under the direction of the County Agriculture Development Board (CADB), according to Calvin G. Wettstein, senior county agent.

A key part of that study is a survey of farmer's attitudes about the future of agriculture in Hun-

terdon and their reactions to the state and CADB's efforts to preserve farmland.

The ag development board was appointed by the Board of Chosen Freeholders in April after a 12-member task force completed its mission to prepare a farmland preservation plan for the county.

The survey will be administered

by the County Planning Board for the CADB. There have been 678 commercial farm operators identified in the county. They include full-time farmers, as well as, part-time farmers, who, studies indicate, farm considerable acreage in the county. All are involved in the production of agricultural or horticultural commodities on a commercial scale, regardless of size of operation.

The survey will go to a randomly selected three hundred farmers. Survey forms will be delivered in person by a volunteer member of the Future Farmers of America or by one of the young farmers who have been actively involved in the county's farmland preservation efforts.

"The survey consists of 22 questions. It can be completed in 20 or 30 minutes," says Wettstein. "Farmers will be asked to identify their most troublesome problems in farming, and then to recommend ways to overcome these difficulties."

Farmers also will be asked for their opinions on the future economic well-being of agriculture, as well as, how they feel farmland can be retained.

The completed survey form will be sealed in a plain envelope, no identifying marks. All replies will be confidential.

In addition to launching the

farmer survey, the planning board and agricultural study committee have been hard at work over the past 6 or 8 months locating and identifying farm operations on a map of the county, determining land use patterns around farms, land ownership patterns of farmland. They are planning a survey of agricultural lenders, to solicit their attitudes and practices toward agriculture.

The entire study should be completed by early spring, reports Wettstein. "It's intention is to provide important, yes, vital, information for the Agriculture Development Board in implementing its farmland retention program, and at the same time, aid the County Planning Board in developing an agricultural element to the county master plan," he states.

"A big effort, yes — but vital if we're to maintain Hunterdon as a strong agricultural county," he concludes.

U.S. red meat production up 3 percent

HARRISBURG — Commercial red meat production in Pennsylvania during November totaled 69.9 million pounds, down 13 percent from November 1980, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

Cattle slaughter at 65,800 head increased five percent from last November and calf slaughter increased 13 percent to 24,000 head. Hog slaughter at 173,200 head decreased 32 percent from November 1980. The number of sheep and lambs slaughtered totaled 14,100, up 11 percent from November of last year.

Nationally, commercial red meat production during November totaled 3.18 billion pounds, up three percent from November 1980. Beef production at 1.80 billion pounds,

up three percent from November 1980. Beef production at 1.80 billion pounds was up six percent, while average liveweight increased two pounds to 1,073.

Veal production at 35 million pounds increased 13 percent and average liveweight decreased to 241 pounds. Pork production totaled 1.32 billion pounds, a decrease of one percent. The average liveweight of hogs slaughtered was unchanged from November at 246 pounds. Lamb and mutton production increased 13 percent to 27 million pounds with an average liveweight of 110 pounds. Commercial red meat production includes slaughter in federally inspected and other plants, but excludes animals slaughtered on farms.

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