

Berks Co. Crops Day sharpens farmers' management skills

BY LAUREL SCHAEFFER
Staff Correspondent

LEESPORT — Berks County farmers had the opportunity to update and sharpen their management skills for alfalfa and corn production as three Penn State Extension agronomists presented discussions during the annual Crops Days held at the Berks County Agricultural Center, here.

Joe McGahen, Extension

agronomist, emphasized the importance of management decisions in producing higher crop yields and stressed the need for the current and timely cultural inputs to consistently attain higher yields.

Farmers must do their homework and have the proper inputs in order for their crops to produce higher yields, he related. The Penn State agronomist also

reminded the farmers that there has been an increase of 130 percent in costs per acre for corn production from 1970 to 1981. This information was taken from the records of 169 corn club members' records. The price received for the corn was up only 84 percent during the same time period, he stated.

McGahen also estimated the costs per bushel of harvested corn for these corn club members averaged \$1.53.

and labor. He warned the area farmers that fixed costs such as tractors, equipment and land averaged between \$65-\$70 per acre, if the corn was planted or not.

The agronomist urged the area farmers to do a good job of planting, attaining the proper seed depth and distribution. He emphasized that the seed should be planted uniformly in the row, not in small bunches and spaces.

McGahen also cautioned that too high plant populations can result in barren plants, noting some varieties of corn are better suited for high populations than others.

Starter fertilizers, the farmers were told, also increases per acre yields—an average of 9-10 bushels per acre. Yield responses to starter fertilizers were especially evident when corn was planted early and temperatures ranged below 60 degrees Fahrenheit; when soil was of low fertility, especially in phosphorus; and when the soil was below 6.5 pH.

McGahen explained the starter fertilizer was part of a planting program and not additional fertilizer. He noted that corn grown with starter fertilizer was 2 or 3 points dryer at harvest because the maturity of the corn was speeded up with the application of starter. The agronomist also noted that starter, without urea should be used, especially if applying high amounts, because "urea can thin out a crop of corn in a hurry."

In order of importance and influence on yields McGahen ranked plant populations as the most important in association with crop yields, number two in importance was weed control while third on McGahen's list was planting dates.

He also showed that higher yields were attained with higher populations and higher amounts of nitrogen.

Also addressing the audience of farmers was Clark Hess, a commodity account executive with Merrill Lynch. Hess briefly explained hedging and the futures market and noted that price trends have been running fairly even.

He stated that hedging corn is for producers who are net sellers of 10,000 or more bushels. He also advised against joining in with fellow producers to attain that quantity. "You have enough partners in your life already," he warned.

The commodity executive explained how brokerage houses keep an active watch on world trends and usually have a meteorologist tracking world weather. He noted that the subsoil moisture in the Midwest was good at the time and didn't expect a government embargo.

Report cards go out on tested rams

STATE COLLEGE — The first report cards have gone out from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Meat Animal Evaluation Center grading the progress of those sheep entered in the 1982 Yearling Ram Test.

Two Dorset rams from single births are tied for first and second place in their division with indexes of .33. This index represents the

rams' starting weights divided by their day of age. Both rams are sired by Carolair D-66 and were lambled in November 1980. They belong to Carolair Farm and Brian Zerby.

A ram from a set of twins is leading the multiple birth entries in the Dorset breed. Ram No. 53, a Penn State entry lambled January 1981, began the test at 170 pounds

with an index of .47. This ram is sired by Morehead 302, who is the sire of the third and fourth-place rams on test in the Dorset breed, too.

A mixture of singles and twins make up the Hampshire junior rams on test at the Evaluation Center. Leading the pack of 11 rams is a February 1981 ram owned by David Lytle. This twin

ram is sired by Mathews Heat Wave Tr and began the test at 215 pounds for a score of .62.

The top two Shropshire rams on test belong to Warn Menhennett and are sired by two homebred rams. The top indexing ram, a March 1981 single, is sired by Menhennett 473. This ram began the test at 204 pounds for an index of .63. A February 1981 twin ram by Menhennett 617 started the test at a lower weight of 183 pounds for a .52 index.

Amanda Silverstein is leading the Southdown ram test with a March 1981 ram sired by Tempel 78-42. This twin weighed 107 pounds at check-in for a .32 index. There is only one other Southdown ram on test this year.

The largest class on the ram test program is that of the Suffolk rams, with 20 twins and singles participating. At the head is Ram No. 23 owned by Elton Acton. This twin ram, lambled February 1981, is sired by Breezeview 163. With a starting weight of 254 pounds, the ram turned in the top index of .73. Another Acton entry and Breezeview 163 son has a second-place ranking of .66. This February 1981 twin is tied with a George Bros 583 son entered by Mrs. Paul Kelly, a March 1981 twin who also indexed out at .66.

According to Robert Kumble, manager of the Evaluation Center, there will be a wide range of performance early in the test due to a variety of conditions. And the test's outcome by the June 5 sale, scheduled for 2 p.m. at the Allentown Fairgrounds, may be entirely different than the initial lineup.

Pa. delegates attend NFU convention

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Pennsylvania will be represented at this weekend's National Farmers Union Convention in Washington, D.C., which continues through March 2 by Miriam Blankley of Hancock, Fulton County; Samuel Reed of Avis, Clinton County; William Sturges of Wellsboro, Tioga County; and James Brown, PFU president of Jamestown, Mercer County.

The National Farmers Union meets annually to set policy to guide the grassroots family farm organization throughout the coming year. Delegates to the National Farmers Union convention are elected by delegates to state Farmers Union conventions.

National Farmers Union President George W. Stone, an outspoken supporter of family farming, will give his annual

report tomorrow evening. Stone warned that the farm bill recently passed by Congress and signed by the President is so weak that it has already begun to put farmers out of business. "That's why we've chosen the theme 'Family Farmers for the Future'—we're beginning to wonder if there'll be any," Stone said.

After adopting policy today and tomorrow, the 1,500 delegates and members expected to attend the convention will exchange views with Congressional leaders.

Monday's speakers will include U.S. Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (Kan.), U.S. Rep. Ed Jones (Tenn.), U.S. Rep. David Obey (Wis.), and U.S. Sen. Mark Andrews (N. Dak.).

Tuesday's speakers include U.S. Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum (Ohio), U.S. Rep. James M. Jeffords (Vt.), National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Executive Vice President Robert D. Partridge, AFL-CIO Vice President Joyce Miller, and humorist Jerry Clower.

Farmers intend to plant more small grains

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania farmers intend to plant more acres of oats, barley, soybeans and hay but fewer acres of corn and tobacco in the upcoming season, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

Farmers plan to sow 1,850,000

acres of corn, down one percent from last year; 400,000 acres of oats, down seven percent; 100,000 acres of barley, up 16 percent; 110,000 acres of soybeans, up five percent; 2,000,000 acres of hay, up three percent; and 13,500 acres of tobacco, down one percent.

**GEBHART'S
SANDBLASTING
& RESTORATION
INC.**
Box 109AA, R.D. 1
Abbottstown, Pa.
17301
717-259-9868

- Water Blasting
- Chemical Cleaning
- Brick & stone Re-pointing & Water-proofing

**"Macho"
Comfort!**
Red Wing Pecos
pull-ons feel fully
as good as they
look. We have
the style you
want and size
you need in
stock!
Stop in!

1155
Now we earned
your Wings!

Red Wings

**BOOKS
SHOE SERVICE**
107 E. STATE ST.
QUARRYVILLE, PA 17566
717-786-2795
CLOSED WEDNESDAYS

COAL/WOOD BOILER
FROM
Firecraft™

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

- ASME Pressure Vessel
- Heavy Duty Cast Iron Rocker Grates and Shaker Handle
- Flush Jacket
- ASME Relief Valve
- Tridicator
- Insulated Fire Door with Damper
- Damper Motor
- L6081A-1002
- L6006A-1004
- Zone Valve (Erie)

**TESTED TO
CSA STANDARDS
BY E.T.L.M.**

BOILER RATINGS & SPECIFICATIONS
Gross Output BTU/Hr. 140,000 BTU/HR.
Chamber Inside Dimensions 16"L x 15½"W x 14"H
Water Capacity of Pressure Vessel 30 Gal.

Regular Price \$1650 **NOW \$1095**

LIOLA FIREPLACE & STOVE SHOP
93 W. Main St., Leola Mon.-Fri. 10-8, Sat. 9-6

717-656-6408

4-J

**HARVESTORE™
SYSTEMS, INC.**
99 Bridge St.
Tunkhannock, PA 18657
717-836-6787

**NOTICE
USED
STRUCTURES**

**First Come,
First Served!**

- 20 x 50 Harvestore w/Hercules Unloader
- 20 x 60 Harvestore w/Goliath Unloader
- 20 x 70 Harvestore w/Goliath Unloader
- 20 x 70 Harvestore w/Goliath Unloader
- 20 x 80 Harvestore w/new Goliath Unloader

Call your local Harvestore salesman or our Tunkhannock office.

We want to thank the over 200 people who attended our Dinner Meetings in February. Also, a special thanks to all who attended our many Open Houses and to our Hosts! Your opinions, thoughts, ideas, and comments are always welcome.
Joel A. Meyer, Sales Manager

NOTE: Open Houses scheduled for March 11 and March 18 are cancelled.

Randy Bowen 717-724-3974 Bob Dicks 717-473-3441
Tom Gooch 814-274-9035 Jeff Guillaume 717-322-5970
Larry Morrow 607-687-4609 Wilson Quiggle 717-265-6004
Mike Wasylkewicz 717-477-3020 Joel Meyer 717-836-6787