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Pa. Pork Producers honor All-American, youth



Sam Elkin, right, of Marion Center, Indiana County, received the Pa. Pork All-American distinction Thursday evening during the 5th Keystone Pork Congress, sponsored by the Pa. Pork Producers Council. Elkin is a managing partner of Maple Ridge Farm, a 500 sow breeding stock operation. Presenting the check from the PPPC and Diamond Shamrock is newly-elected president, Elwood Houser, Lebanon.

CAMP HILL — Whether it was a chance to celebrate a year of better prices or just a day off the farm, Pennsylvania pork producers turned out in droves for this year's 5th Keystone Pork Congress, held here at the Penn Harris.

Along with educational sessions and commercial exhibits, this year's Congress was a time for honoring youth and outstanding producers. Indiana County's Sam Elkin was selected as the 1983 Pennsylvania Pork All-American, while FFA'er Ted Brown Jr. of Crawford County and Melissa Trostle of York County received awards for their youth achievements.

Elkin is managing partner of the Maple Ridge Farm hog operation located at Marion Center. Maple Ridge Farm was started in the spring of 1970, and over the years has grown into a facility with nearly an acre under roof and a 500 sow capacity.

At Maple Ridge Farm, Elkin has achieved an increase in production through careful management. Current records show 2.2 litters per sow per year, with ap-

proximately 20 sows per week weaning 8.7 pigs per litter or 19.1 pigs per year.

Elkin, who is an agricultural engineering graduate of West Virginia University, is active in numerous industry activities including participation in the checkoff program and faithful attendance at both the state and national Congresses. Elkin also has actively promoted the industry by welcoming visiting groups to the farm, and taking the farm to civic meetings through slide programs.

This year's Pork All-American resides with wife Paula and their four children, David, 9, Beth, 6, Adrienne, 4, and Nathan, 8 months.

Eighteen-year-old Ted Brown Jr. was all smiles as he received still another honor in his long list of FFA accomplishments. The son of Ted and Jean Brown of R2 Conneautville, Crawford County, Ted owns 40 sows which he keeps on the families 250-acre farm. He explains that the hogs are a joint project between himself and his three younger brothers and younger sister.

When he's not working on the

farm or in the family's feedmill or custom meat shop, Ted is out earning awards or serving as a youth leader. The young swine producer has achieved recognition in public speaking, agricultural mechanics, and swine production at both the state and national levels of FFA.

Ted currently is serving as FFA chapter president. He also holds this office in the Conneaut Township 4-H Club, the Crawford County FFA Council, and in his high school class of 1983.

Melissa Trostle, 15, proved her swine production and showmanship ability, not only to the readers of *Lancaster Farming* who saw her practicing for Farm Show with an uncooperative market hog in our Jan. 8 issue, but to the Pennsylvania Pork Producers who selected her for this year's 4-H Achievement award.

Melissa is the daughter of Ronald and Yvonne Trostle of R2 Red Lion. Melissa says she grew up in the swine industry, and has been showing hogs, mostly Spotted Poland Chinas, since she was eight

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Block says PIK "only hope"

BY SHEILA MILLER
WASHINGTON, D.C. — Two major topics dominated the discussions here last week during the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Ag Journalist Conference - the first conference of its kind called by the USDA. The Payment-In-Kind and Dairy programs were zeroed in on by reporters and speakers, alike.

Despite the fact that Friday's blizzard sent most of USDA's employees scuttling for home through two feet of snow, Ag Secretary John Block weathered the storm in order to explain his office's position on PIK and the 50-cent dairy assessment.

One of the major issues facing the PIK program is the question of taxation, and several bills have been introduced in Congress addressing this. Under proposed legislative change, payments-in-

kind received by producers under the PIK program would be treated for tax purposes in the same manner as actual production. This means that taxable income would not be reported until the farmer sold the PIK commodities, either as grain or fed livestock.

However, the question remains as to whether these legislative changes will be acted on by Congress before the March 11 deadline for PIK sign-up. Block stated that he is confident Congress will move quickly on the legislation, and noted there are no plans to extend the March 11 deadline.

"The producers should not be concerned - that should not be a deterrent to sign-up in compliance of the program. I assure them that they will be protected," he stated, adding that the needed changes

would be made administratively if not legislatively.

Without a change, however, payment-in-kind would be treated as income at the time the farmer has a right to receive it, regardless of when the commodities were actually sold by the farmer. Block said this could mean a farmer would owe taxes on a payment-in-kind even though there had been no sale and no cash income to pay the taxes.

"The payments-in-kind under the PIK program will be a partial substitute for the commodities that would have been produced on land diverted from production," Block explained. "So, we think it's only fair that the timing of taxes on PIK commodities be adjusted to coincide with when the producer has income from their disposition."

Block encouraged farmers to

sign up for the program, noting that contracts can be revised or withdrawn until March 11. He said the contract does not become effective and binding until after the deadline.

Concerning possible changes to PIK, Block said he will "strenuously resist efforts to change the program."

"We are right in the middle of the sign-up. Changing the rules now would confuse the producers," Block stressed. "The truth is, farmers like this program quite a bit. If they like it, why go in and

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John R. Block

It's an artichoke 'medicine show'

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
TERRE HILL — The patent medicine pitchman who once roamed ag communities during the past century is not dead.

He's alive and still "pitching" and came to Lancaster County this week.

While his original counterpart may have traveled in gaily decorated covered wagon, the modern medicine man comes in conventional auto.

The 19th Century version may have had a banjo or singer to entertain the curious crowd. But today's 20th Century pitchman carries a Beta-Max and a cassette to play over the TV.

A century ago, the vagabond salesman peddled magic elixirs

and potions to cure all of the ills of the body and mind.

Now, he comes with a panacea to cure the financial ills of today's economically hard-pressed farmer.

And while there are these differences, the theme of the "pitch" and the "show" he stages are the same: "I have something to help change your future."

The something that this week's modern medicine show in Terre Hill was pitching was Jerusalem artichokes - regarded by the show's script as possibly the newest of miracle crops and considered by others as a sort of perennial weed that's tough to get rid of once it's in your fields.

The medicine show pitchman

came to Terre Hill and other towns in Lancaster County, not only with gobs of information, pamphlets, books and newspaper articles, but also with two-year agreements to sell artichoke seedstock to farmers and then possibly resell their tubers next year.

Boiled down to their simplest form, these agreements provide:

-That a farmer must put \$12,000 upfront to buy the seedstock.

-And the company selling them guarantees nothing except the receipt of the seedstock.

-Oh, there's an exclusive marketing agreement concerning next year's crop to be sold as seedstock. But the company solely

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Is milk security fund running dry?

HARRISBURG — The financial solvency of the Pennsylvania Milk Security Fund established in 1960 has come to the front burner as farm organizations throughout the Keystone State fire questions at the state's Department of Agriculture and Milk Marketing Board.

This Wednesday, members of the State Grange dairy committee met with PMMB's Earl Fink and Sen. Frank O'Connell (R-20th) to discuss the current dilemma facing the security fund, and what can be done to solve the problem.

Fink reviewed the status of the security fund as of Jan. 31, 1983, pointing out the current balance of the fund is \$726,156.82 which was raised through a one-cent-per-hundredweight checkoff from milk handlers. Those funds may soon disappear as claims from financially-troubled milk dealers are processed.

Currently, Damon Dairy Co. of Baltimore, Sun-Re Cheese Co. of Sunbury, and Shadow Brook Farms of Scranton have filed claims in excess of \$1.2 million.

Commenting on the bankrupt situation, State Grange Master Charles Wismer commented, "There's not enough money to pay even 75 percent of the claims. And once we do pay, there's no security left for other farmers."

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