

Lancaster Farming

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Narvon mine

Lancaster honors top conservationists

BLUE BALL — The Lancaster County Conservation District paused Thursday night to honor the top conservationists for the past year.

Sharing honors were Francis and Ethel Kirk, of near Wakefield, the Outstanding Cooperators; individuals from ASCS and SCS

cited for service and several groups who accomplished a storm water management project in Sadsbury Township.

And amidst this pause, featured speaker, State Ag Sec. Penrose Hollowell favorably predicted the survival of the small family farm that is characteristic of Lancaster County.

And, in somewhat of a couple of departures from the regular speech theme, Hollowell spoke briefly about the Narvon Mine and efforts to make the Farm Show "All-American-made."

—In answer to a question from the audience concerning the Pa. Department of Agriculture's position on the proposed hazardous waste dump for the Narvon Mine, Hollowell said:

"You can be sure we will protect the interests of agriculture."

He cited the land condemnation board that now exists that can take a look at the proposal to make certain that the proposed dump would not affect area agriculture and that there is not a better location for such a facility.

Hollowell qualified these statements by explaining that location of such facilities is one of

(Turn to Page A36)

Ag Sec. Block

coming to Lancaster

LANCASTER — U.S. Sec. of Agriculture John Block is coming to Lancaster next month.

Block will be the keynote speaker at the open house for the new Purina Chow Plant in the Hempfield Industrial Park west of Lancaster on Friday, April 8. He is scheduled to speak about 11:30 a.m. at the plant, located off Rt. 30 at the Centreville Exit.



Francis and Ethel Kirk, Lancaster County's Outstanding Cooperators, with aerial photo of their farm presented at Thursday's Conservation District banquet.

Pa. Extension hiring freeze

beyond July 1?

LANCASTER — The current hiring freeze for Agricultural Extension personnel could well continue beyond July 1, Samuel Smith, Dean of Penn State's College of Agriculture, said on Wednesday.

"Right now, we have no plans for lifting the freeze on July 1," Smith said.

"If we don't get some good signs from Washington (concerning budget cuts) and there is no state budget, there's quite a good chance the freeze will continue."

Counties, such as Lebanon where Agent Newton Bair is retiring, are vitally interested in the hiring freeze and how long it may continue.

Prior to a scheduled Ag Week speech before the Lancaster Rotarey Club, Dean Smith discussed the depth of his concerns over fiscal problems that are looming for the College of Agriculture at Penn State and the Extension System throughout the Commonwealth.

He explained that formula funding from the Federal Government for ag research and

(Turn to Page A31)

Hog, poultry farmers to feel PIK

Pennsylvania hog and poultry farmers are keeping a keen eye on the aftermath of PIK.

Their interest is not centered on those millions of idle acres, but the effect that those grainless fields will have on feed and production costs in the coming months.

Even before the government announced on Tuesday that 82.3 million acres will be taken out of production, the cash and futures grain markets had been feeling the effects of the expected record signup.

And when traders heard that more than one out of every three acres normally planted to major crops will lie idle this year, the upward swing in grain prices escalated.

Here's some examples: The March 10 price on the futures market for May corn was \$2.83 a bushel. It has since jumped more than 25 cents.

Soybeans futures were up about 50 cents a bushel. And meal had risen more than \$15.00 a ton.

And all of this will be reflected in feed to be used by area farmers and increase their production costs

to finish each pound of pork, raise a broiler or produce a dozen eggs.

Poultry operators, who have been walking a tightrope, will find their positions even more precarious.

And the hog farmers, who have had something of a profit margin lately, may find it harder to maintain those levels.

All of this concern is due to the position of Pennsylvania and the Northeast in general as a grain-deficit area. Much more is fed out here than is grown.

While the figures announced by the USDA have already caused widespread ripples throughout grain markets, there are some questions that will need to be answered as the full effect of all of those idle acres is felt.

Saying that the signups were beyond "my wildest expectations," Ag Sec. Block was already predicting drastic reductions in particularly corn and wheat crops this year.

There's no doubt that overall figures will be down, but it still remains to be seen how much.

While more than one-third of acres will be out of grain production, you can be sure that

(Turn to Page A34)

Irwin cites artichoke questions

LANCASTER — Farmers considering the planting of Jerusalem artichokes should ask themselves several questions before making any decision, cautions Jay W. Irwin, County Agricultural Agent.

"We have received many calls about this crop," Irwin said.

"We suggest that farmers ask themselves the following questions:

—Is there a guaranteed market for the product?

—What new machines will be required to plant and harvest the crop?

—Will this crop require additional labor?

—"Most importantly, how will this crop affect my good land?"

(Turn to Page A24)

Direct marketing

From farm

Pa. approves \$250,000 in loans

to home

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

HARRISBURG — Twelve low-interest loans totaling a quarter of a million dollars have been approved thus far in Pennsylvania's program to encourage direct marketing of Commonwealth farm products.

With the approval of the 12 loans, nearly three-quarters of a million dollars still remains in the revolving fund, which features an interest rate of four and a quarter percent this year.

The dozen initial loans are spread across the state and include a variety of direct farm marketing operations.

Two of the loans involve Lancaster County markets, including expansion of an existing diversified farm market and another

that retails only apples on a 10-month basis.

The first loan involved a farm market in Armstrong County.

And the most unique market operation approved for a loan is a lamb and wool operation in Westmoreland County. In addition to the sale of meat, the operation is installing a blocking machine and will be selling wool products from the small flock associated with the market.

Presently, two or three applications are under consideration, according to Don Unangst, director of agricultural development for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

"The fund was established last July with \$987,000 in federal rural rehabilitation money that was not

being used," Unangst explains.

"The funds were put into the direct farm market development program because we think it is one of the best ways for Pennsylvania farmers to sell their products."

In addition to Unangst, the program's board which reviews the loan applications includes Amos Funk, Tom Styer and Paul Konhaus, three well-known direct farm marketers in Pennsylvania and Eugene Wingert, of PDA's Office of Planning and Research.

The major requirement to apply for a loan is that the applicant must be engaged in an agricultural operation that produces a commodity that is sold at the farm market. The program encourages the sale of other Pennsylvania

(Turn to Page A36)

