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# Lancaster Farming

Ag

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A seasonal sentinel welcomes anyone driving up the lane of the dairy farm of the David A. Brandt family, located off Rt. 322 south of Campbelltown. While the scarf is real and the buttons are reflectors, only the snowman's headgear would identify him as farm-youngster built. A feed pan becomes a form-fitting bowler.

## Avian funds okayed

**BY LAURA ENGLAND**  
LANCASTER — Through added precautions taken by poultrymen and the containment of the disease, the number of new cases of avian influenza reported weekly has dropped drastically since the program to eradicate the infected birds began mid-November.

During the week of Jan. 28, four flocks were diagnosed with the deadly avian flu virus. This was the lowest number reported since the USDA-sponsored task force began eradicating the diseased chickens.

In the early stages of the eradication program, weekly reports numbered in the upper 20's and low 30's, according to task force spokesman Wayne Baggett. For the first three weeks of January, the numbers were in the teens, reaching the low of four last week.

As of Thursday, a total of 265 flocks, representing 10.4 million birds, had been diagnosed with avian flu. The task force expected to have all diagnosed flocks depopulated by Thursday afternoon, Baggett said.

Included in this week's

depopulation schedule was the first low pathogenic flock, an 85,000 layer flock near Manheim. Under a decision passed by the USDA last week, all flocks infected with avian flu - whether the low or high pathogenic strain - are to be slaughtered.

From this point on, Baggett said that no distinction will be made between low and high pathogenic flocks. Birds testing positive for avian flu will be destroyed.

At a press meeting Monday, task force director Dr. Jerry Fichtner said that the USDA decision gives the task force the authority to conduct surveillance programs in all poultry populations within the 5,000 square-mile quarantine zone; to diagnose avian influenza; and to depopulate all flocks with the disease.

The decision, however, does not place additional restrictions on bird movement, does not change the cleaning and disinfecting and depopulating procedures, nor the repopulation guidelines.

Fichtner said that flocks previously diagnosed with the mild strain must be reevaluated to see if

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## Electronic monitors in tomatoes show vegetable research progress

**BY DICK ANGLESTEIN**

HERSHEY — Grower-sponsored vegetable research and promotion in Pennsylvania may be less than five percent of what it is in states like California, but the fledgling effort is already showing results in the Commonwealth.

For example, it's possible in the not too distant future that tomato growers will be able to walk out into their fields and check a little electronic "black box" that will tell them instantly when it's time to spray for early blight.

The tomato field monitors are just one example of results of grower-sponsored research that were among reports given at this week's Pa. Vegetable Conference at the Hershey Convention Center.

The Growers Research Program funded a total of 10 projects last year at a cost of \$27,000, including the early blight study. During the coming year, approximately \$30,000 will be available.

In comparison, growers in California contribute some \$800,000 a year with \$250,000 going to research and the remainder to promotion.

The tomato early blight study is being conducted by Alan A. MacNab, of Plant Pathology Extension at Penn State.

"We expect to have two prototypes this year of the boxes that will automatically collect data electronically in the fields and tell us when it's time to spray the tomatoes," MacNab reported at the conference.

For the past couple of years several tomato growers across the state have been manually collecting the data in the fields. The data on environmental weather conditions, such as temperature, dew period, relative humidity and amount of rain, permits prediction of the times that are most suitable for early blight development.

The environmental data is then used in a computer program to determine when fungicide spraying is needed to check the disease.

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Principals at this week's Pa. vegetable conference at Hershey include, from the left, Dale Whitenight, R6 Danville, retiring president; Ernest Bergman, Penn State, and Rudy Grob, R1 Millersville, program co-chairmen; and William Troxell, executive secretary, Vegetable Growers Association.

## Pa. Hort Assn. approves vote on peach research

HERSHEY — The State Horticulture Association will request the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to conduct a referendum vote among peach and nectarine growers concerning a proposed grower-sponsored research program.

The action to request the vote among growers was taken at Wednesday's business session of the Hort Assn. at the annual session at the Hershey Convention Center, according to Joseph Strite, of Dauphin County, retiring president.

The proposed grower-sponsored research fund, which could initially total some \$20,000 if approved, would come from assessments placed on peach and

nectarine growers in the state. The assessment would be \$2.00 per acre on fruit-bearing peach and nectarine orchards of trees of at least four years of age. The assessment would apply to growers with 500 or more peach and nectarine trees of all ages.

The proposed research would be directed at the major increasing problem of the reduced life span of peach trees that appears to be caused by a combination of diseases, pests and winter damage.

A tentative timetable for the referendum, if it can be so set up, would be a vote among growers by July 1, assessments in the fall if

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## Pa. eyes dairy promotion

LANCASTER — A state program for milk promotion that failed to gain the dairymen's approval a few years ago, may become a reality this spring. Officials of the Pa. Department of Agriculture plan to submit a proposal for a state promotion program to the USDA.

Under the new federal dairy program, a mandatory 15 cents per hundredweight will be paid to the

National Dairy Promotion Program Up to 10 cents of this deduction may be retained in states where an advertising program is in place.

"We are trying to establish an alternative program for Pennsylvania dairymen that don't have another promotion program on the local level," said James Sumner, PDA marketing director. "We are simply looking for a means for 10 cents to stay in Pennsylvania."

Sumner said the department was waiting for release of regulations on the promotion program from the USDA before writing the proposal. Currently, state officials are investigating ways of conducting a state milk promotion program.

The program would probably be run as an advisory board made up of dairy farmers, said Sumner.

## Markets report increase in cows

**BY LAURA ENGLAND**  
LANCASTER — With farmers participating in the dairy compromise program, livestock auctions can expect to see an increase in dairy cow numbers, but just how many will not be easy to determine.

For the past two months, livestock auctions have recorded an increase in dairy cow numbers. This increase, according to John Zimmerman, chief of the livestock division of the state Bureau of Marketing, is due partly to last summer's drought, dairy bill participation and simply farmers culling for herd reasons.

"The drought caused short feed supplies," Zimmerman said, "and

farmers culled for that reason. They're culling for the dairy bill, also."

Zimmerman, who covers the Lebanon Valley auction in Fredericksburg, said 149 dairy cows were sold at that auction this

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Tuesday. Before Christmas, 200 head went through the ring. The normal average for Lebanon Valley is 75 to 90 head, Zimmerman added.

An increase was also reported at

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## Sire summary found on Pages D22-27

The January, 1984 Sire Summary with the new genetic base PD82 begins on Page D22 and continues through Page D27.

The six pages of the latest genetic dairy information

includes the most recent six-month update of active AI sires as compiled by the USDA and Dairy Herd Improvement Association.

All transmitting abilities are expressed for the first time as deviations from the

1982 genetic base and are labeled PD82.

Predicted Differences are listed for both yield and percentages for all three milk components - fat, protein and solids-not-fat