

Berks Extension passes in review

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS
Staff Correspondent

LEESPORT — Over 200 "friends of the extension association" attended the 70th Annual Meeting of the Berks County Extension Association held last Monday evening in Bern Township. Taking advantage of the spacious, newly completed 4-H Community Center, the banquet-meeting featured the extension staff and the highlights from the variety of the programs that they carry out each day.

"This is the finest extension staff in the state of Pennsylvania," Herbert A. Wetzel, Berks County extension director, began the introductions. With a staff of seven county agents and home economists and four nutrition aides, the Berks County extension service is able to provide programs in livestock, horticulture, farm management, 4-H in the city and country, dairy education, nutrition, home economics, and many, many more opportunities to members of the community. Wetzel and the staff went on to explain the highlights of their programs.

Beginning with pomology, Wetzel used a slide presentation to explain the modern methods of growing apples. George Hekman, general manager of Ontelaunee Orchards, Leesport, also helped to explain many of the procedures and problems that apple growers are faced with.

"Our number one problem is marketing," Hekman stated. "We know how to grow them, now we must learn how to sell them." "We have to do more promotion," he told everyone present. "Agriculture is still the number one industry," he continued. Working with the extension and cooperating with Penn State in various research projects, Hekman also assists in conducting educational classes for the community, "I always support the

extension as much as possible," he concluded.

Clyde Myers, the county agent concerned with dairy and livestock, continued the program with several of his featured programs conducted this year. The hoof to rail, sheep carcass evaluation program proved to be well attended and very helpful to sheep producers according to Myers. A stray voltage eradication session was also conducted on many of the county farms and included electrical experts assistance to solve the problems.

Myers also organized the farm-city activities which increased this year to include farmer-businessmen exchanges, and a farm-city banquet-meeting to be held in November. His involvement with the local Chamber of Commerce and many county farmer groups also lead to an educational film presentation show at many meetings and schools to enhance farm-city relations.

Computers, brassicas, and management were discussed by Harry Schaffer, farm management agent. William Zollers, Guernsey dairyman from R1, Mertztown, also assisted Schaffer with a slide presentation explaining the brassica test plots conducted in the County.

Zollers planted turnips on his dairy farm and experienced good results in feeding them to his milking herd. "We did find there was an increase of six pounds of milk per day during the period of this feeding," Zollers reported. "It has a real use..", Schaffer stated. He said that current research involving brassicas and sorghum-sudan grasses also looks very promising and told farmers that complete results and data will be available from his office in the future. This was the second season of brassicas in Berks County and the test plots involved approximately 120 acres in eight

demonstration plots.

Horticultural programs were briefly outlined by Judith Stoudt, homegrounds and horticultural agent. In her presentation she featured the horticultural therapy program being conducted at the Hamburg Center. Utilized to teach basis life functions through the care and nurturing of plants, the therapy program currently involves 11 client-patients, and the success is encouraging according to Stoudt. She also outlined the Master Gardener program.

Master gardener, Margaret Ebeling, Reading, explained her progress because of the program. Ebeling was instrumental in teaching vegetable gardening to inner-city Reading homemakers.

Gail Malsbury, president of the Berks County Cooperative Extension Association, presided over the business meeting. She presented plaques for their service to the extension to Kenneth Schlegel and Sandra Christman, members of the board.

Distinguished Service awards were also presented to Herbert Wetzel, extension director, and Diane Brown, southeast regional program director.

"Herb has been very influential here in Berks County," Clyde Myers stated as he presented Wetzel with the Nittany Lion award. Wetzel has served Berks County for 24 years.

Claudia Cross from the Pennsylvania Association of Extension Home Economists, was on hand to present Diane Brown with her Nittany Lion plaque. Brown's regional programs focused on helping families manage their available resources. She designed and implemented workshops and TV spots and also provided statewide leadership in planning and evaluating them for use by other home economists.

Evening entertainment was provided by the Kutztown Area High School chorus and "Berks Extension in Review" was enjoyed by everyone.



Clyde Myers presents Herb Wetzel "Nittany Lion" award for distinguished service to Berks Extension.



Claudia Cross presents Diane Brown with plaque for distinguished service in Berks County.



Kenneth Schlegel and Sandra Christman receive plaques for their service to Berks Extension Board of Directors.

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