

PSU's Mr. & Ms. College of Ag: Study in contrasts

UNIVERSITY PARK — Getting involved has paid off for college students William Leshner and Ellen Cherchuck. They are this year's Penn State Mr. and Ms. College of Agriculture.

William and Ellen were elected by Penn State students at the annual Ag Hill Festival in October. Besides their class work and club activities, they'll represent Penn State at major agricultural events, talking about the importance of an education in agriculture and answering questions about agricultural programs at Penn State.

William and Ellen are very different people.

William has lived at Way-Har Farms in Bernville, Berks County all his life. His family has a dairy operation with more than 110 cows, and they plant 900 acres of corn, alfalfa and small grains. William's family operates a dairy store that sells meats, groceries, milk and ice cream.

"That's why I'm majoring in agricultural science," William says. "I want a mix of dairy and

business knowledge. I'm putting a big emphasis on classes in dairy nutrition, reproduction and herd management, because that's going to be a big thing down the road for me."

At Tulpehocken High School, he received the Keystone Farmer degree as a senior—the highest honor from Future Farmers of America. He won the FFA's outstanding Star Farmer and Star Agri-businessman award as a freshman, and his dairy judging team placed second in the FFA's Eastern States Competition when he was a junior.

William also belongs to the Western Berks 4-H Dairy Club. His dairy judging team finished first in the state and second in the nation in 1984. His bowl team did the same thing in 1982.

But dairy farming wasn't William's only interest in high school. He was also a member of Tulpehocken's honor society and student council.

At Penn State, William is a member of the university's Block and Bridle Club, Coaly Society,

agricultural honor society and the Ag Student Council. This fall, William was the chairman of the Nittany Lion Fall Classic, a Holstein sale and display held in the Ag Arena.

But William's objective in working with all these organizations isn't to get a job with some agricultural-related company. "I definitely plan to go home after graduation," he says. "I'm really looking forward to working with Mom and Dad (Shirley and Wayne Leshner). Maybe one day I'll be a partner. I already play a role in the labor and management decisions."

While William grew up on a farm, Ellen had no farm experience before college. She grew up in Carlisle, and her only experience with agriculture was what she learned from her older sister, who owns an orchard and greenhouse business in Virginia, and her brother, a hog farmer in Carlisle.

"You don't need a farm background to succeed in agriculture," the daughter of Paul and Marion Cherchuck says. "If you're interested in science and you like dealing with people, you'll fit in agriculture. You can do something for others, and really have an impact."

In high school, Ellen was the yearbook editor, the class vice-president, a member of the principal's advisory council and the cross-country team's manager. But she was also interested in plants. When she came to Penn State to study agronomy (the science of crops and soil) she quickly joined the Agronomy Club and other scientific groups.

She plans to go into crop production or management research when she graduates. "Like I said, I'm interested in science and people," she explains. "Agriculture combines both of these things."

As a member of the soil judging team, Ellen has spent nights and weekends learning the fine points of soil classification. Penn State's team placed second in the Northeast Regional competition this fall.

But by far, Ms. College of



Ellen Cherchuck



William Leshner

Agriculture is Ellen's biggest achievement at Penn State. She hopes to introduce agriculture to new Penn State students, especially those from non-farm backgrounds.

"Some people have such a limited view of agriculture," she says. "Even the students already at Penn State tend to see agriculture as working with cows. There's so much more. As Ms. College of Agriculture, I'd like to expand this image."

Both William and Ellen know what's in store for this year's Mr. and Ms. College of Agriculture. They must attend faculty meetings

as student representatives, and talk to hundreds of prospective agricultural college students. But both know the real job they're expected to do.

"Our big job is to promote Penn State," William says. "We have a good thing here, and it's important to let everyone know about it. Ten years from now, when agricultural production gets even more competitive and new agricultural jobs open up, agricultural business owners and managers are going to need backgrounds in management and marketing. Ellen and I can get this message across as Mr. and Ms. College of Agriculture."

Penn State to study

acid rain effect on crops

HARRISBURG — State Agricultural Secretary Richard E. Grubb has announced the award of a \$200,000 research project designed to assess the impact of acid rain on agricultural production in the Commonwealth.

"This project can help our agricultural industry learn more about the effects of acid rain on key crops such as corn and oats, which are the focus of the study," said Grubb. "Information gleaned from the project should prove valuable to the entire industry, from the farmer to the customer," he added.

The project, to be carried out by researchers at the Pennsylvania State University, calls for establishment of test plots of field

corn and oats in four mobile greenhouses at the University's Rock Springs Research Farm.

According to project guidelines, a rain delivery system will also be established to allow simulated rain to be pumped simultaneously to all plots in the houses. Four different pH treatments will be administered in each house. The pH levels will reflect the upper and lower limits of rain in Central Pennsylvania, as well as levels from surrounding areas. The plants will then be evaluated according to several criteria.

Funding for the project was made possible through a line item appropriation for acid rain precipitation studies in the Agriculture Department's 1985-86 budget.

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A6611	115	39	Pioneer 3358	+6 Bu.
A6615	115	45	Pioneer 3358	+7.2 Bu.
A6615	115	31	Dekalb 1100	+6.8 Bu.
A6630	115	24	Dekalb 1100	+5.9 Bu.
A6630	115	42	Pioneer 3358	+4.5 Bu.
A6655	116	46	Pioneer 3358	+7.7 Bu.
A6655	116	40	Dekalb 1100	+13.5 Bu.
A6655	116	28	Dekalb 656	+12 Bu.
A6655	116	32	Funks 4522	+9.9 Bu.
A6655	116	45	Pioneer 3378	+6.7 Bu.

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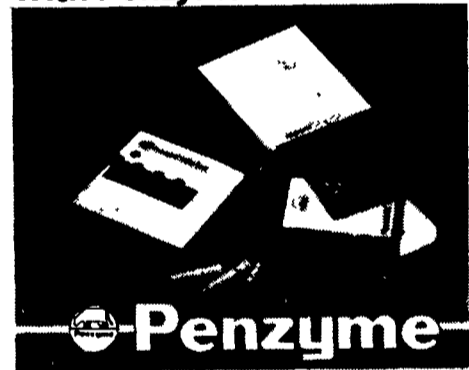
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