

State's Agribusiness Award winner to be picked tonight

BY JAMES H. EVERHART
HARRISBURG — Tonight, one of six semifinalists will be crowned the state's Agribusiness of the Year, in honor of its participation in the "Pennsylvania Agriculture" logo contest.

The honor, given for the past few years, will be presented at the 1986 Pre-Farm Show Dinner at the Harrisburg Marriot.

All six companies, food processors of various products, have incorporated the "We're Growing Better" or "Keystone Pride" logos into their food packaging. The "growing" logo is for shipments inside the state, while "Keystone" is intended for out-of-state usage.

One of the logos must be incorporated into the firm's label, packaging or shipping carton, or used extensively in their ad-



Darrel R. Gibble

vertising and promotions.

In addition, the company had to produce a high-quality product that meets all state and federal regulations. In addition, the processors were required to meet a minimum percentage in the usage of Pennsylvania raw products.

Judges were also allowed to consider the longevity of the company's participation in the logo contest, and the size and breadth of the firm's marketing reach.

The nominees include:

Kutztown Bologna and Country Fresh Foods

Owners Jerry Landuyt and Terry Kieffer have participated in the state's logo program since it originated in 1981.

And, in fact, they've made it a critical part of their marketing effort, using the logo on virtually all their packaging, in some cases, as large as their own.

The two purchased the business in 1979 from Roy S. Burkholder, operating under their present name since 1981.

The firm markets about 38 bologna and prepared food products, all of which display the logo, throughout a six-state area. Their products are sold through direct marketing to consumers and wholesale distribution.

A 500-pound-a-week operation in 1979, the firm's 38 employees now process more than 40,000 pounds of Lebanon bologna each week. And most of the raw materials — an estimated 85 percent, to be exact — come from Pennsylvania growers and meat producers.

"We try to buy as much from Pennsylvania as we can," Kieffer said in a phone interview this week.

And though their Kutztown

Bologna products find their way into most of the large supermarket chains, the Country Fresh Foods operation, for the most part, goes directly to consumers, either through their own salesmen or food service distributors.

"It's a nice little business," Kieffer said. "Consumers can't buy this kind of beef in the store. And once they get a taste of it, they like it."

Kieffer believes his firm's involvement in the logo program has been an unmixed blessing.

"Pennsylvania products are synonymous with quality," he said. "And we've never been questioned on the quality of our products."

Nibble with Gibble's, Inc.

Darrel R. Gibble started in the potato chip business when he was 17, peeling potatoes at the family's kitchen table.

It was 1959, and he dreamed of a snack food business, which his father eventually helped launch with a \$1,500 investment.

Today, the Chambersburg firm sells 10 million packages of potato chips annually, all of which have the "Pennsylvania Agriculture" logo on the back. Gibble's employs 345 workers, marketing its products throughout much of the Eastern U.S.

Although only ten percent of the potatoes used are purchased from local sources, the company buys all of its popcorn, 95 percent of its lard and 20 percent of its packaging film from local sources.

In fact, the use of lard has become a symbol of the firm's commitment to retain a "home style" flavor. While competitors often switched to vegetable oils after reaching a certain volume,



Kutztown Bologna owners Terry Kieffer left, and Jerry Landuyt with their company's products.

Gibbel stuck to the old-time method,

"We aren't about to change the quality of our chip as business expands," Gibble said. "We still make the same quality chip now as we did back in 1959 when our whole operation began."

Spring Glen Farm Kitchen

From its beginning in the mid 1940s, Spring Glen Farm has grown into a supplier of prepared foods to a five-state area.

Founded by the Sensenig family in Ephrata, the company now employs 115 workers and purchases about half of its raw materials from local suppliers.

The company also operates 13 farmer's market stands, and sells to stores, restaurants and distributors throughout the region.

The company incorporates the "Pennsylvania Agriculture" logo in all of its packaging and in most of its advertising and promotional materials.

(A feature on Spring Glen Farms

appears on page B14 of today's Lancaster Farming.)

Kessler's Inc.

One of the oldest companies under consideration for the award, Lemoyne-based Kessler's has produced Nittany Lion Franks in affiliation with Penn State University since 1977.

The firm incorporates the "We're Growing Better" into 50 percent of its packaged products, which are sold to more than 3,200 wholesale accounts.

Most of the firm's products are sold within the state boundaries, and virtually all of the company's raw materials are purchased from local meat producers.

Kessler's also uses the logo in radio, billboard and newspaper advertising.

Shaw Brothers, Inc.

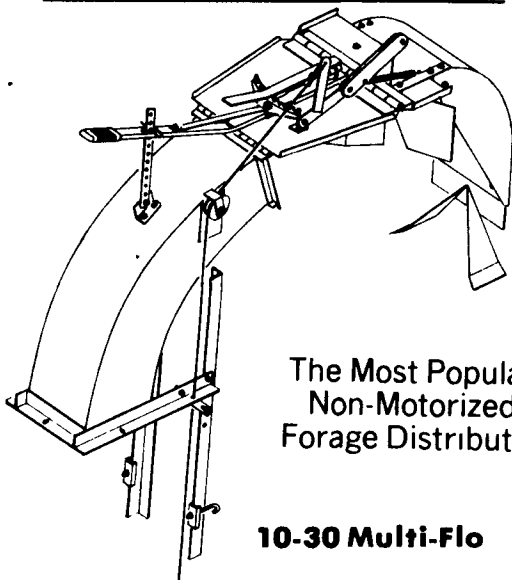
With four generations of the Shaw family active in the business,

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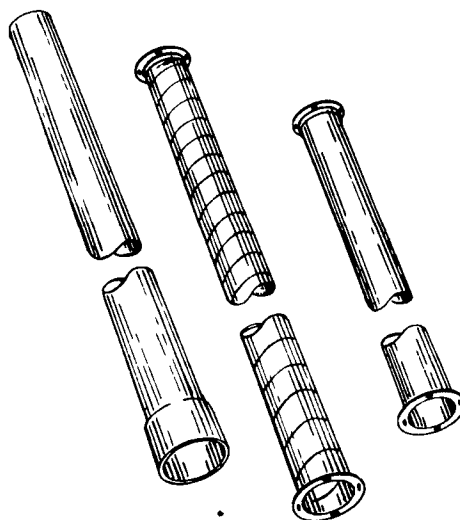
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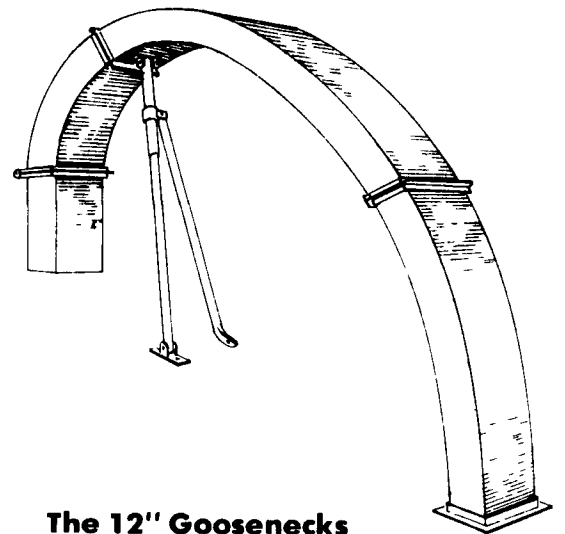
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Fill Pipe and Accessories

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