

# York farms honored for Farm-City Week participation

BY JOYCE BUPP  
Staff Correspondent

**YORK** — Four York County farms and four local businessmen were honored during the annual York Ag-Business seminar, February 27, at the York Fairgrounds banquet center.

Recognition went to those farms and business representatives who participated in the 1985 Farm-City exchange, held on National Ag Day, March 20. Businessmen spent the day with their farm hosts, then hosted their farm exchanges to their business at a later date.

Participants were Paul and Gail McPherson, Maple Lawn Farms, who hosted Bill Groft of the York Bank and Trust Company; Martin Grey, Sinking Springs Farms who exchanged visits with Gregory Keller of the Drivers and Mechanics Bank; Jerry and Carolyn Rutter of Rutter's Livestock and their exchangee Walter Jeffers, Agribusiness Insurance Center; and Robert L. Smyser, Smyser's Richlawn Farms and James Vallosio of the General Telephone Company of Pennsylvania.

"Agriculture and Its Environment" was the theme of the 23rd ag-business session, which drew about one hundred representatives from the business and agriculture communities.

Speakers included state Director of Environmental Resources Paul Swartz and Penn State specialists Dr. Les Lanyon, Dr. John Skelly and Dr. Karen Mancl.

After spending \$26 million for a five-year study and report on the Chesapeake, the Environmental Protection Agency will now shell out a couple of million more for a model to show how the Bay works, says DER director Swartz.

"More with less" is the message of Bay funding, especially in the area of nutrient management. Two of the largest problems of the estuary are nitrogen and manure pollution, with manure management and central focus of spending in Pennsylvania.

Swartz says that farmers in the 27,000-square-mile Bay watershed basin area are applying annually an extra \$90 in nutrients to their farmland, or the equivalent of \$2200 per farm.

Increasing concentrations of animal numbers on decreasing amounts of land is the concern of soils specialist Dr. Les Lanyon. Dr. Lanyon related statistics showing over half the animal manure in Pennsylvania is produced in the Southeastern corner of the state, with up to 27 tons applied per acre to some Lancaster County land.

Since 72 percent of the state's ag income is directly derived from livestock or poultry commodities, Lanyon is working with DER funded measuring equipment to monitor volumes of manure applied per acre. Use of this technology can help farmers pinpoint actual tonnages of nutrients applied to cropland. The aim is to drastically slice the contribution from the Susquehanna basin of 70 percent of the nitrogen and 56 percent of phosphorus levels that are creating problems in the Bay's marine environment.

Pollution expert Dr. John Skelly looks up instead of down in the environment, claiming a Chicken Little, or "the sky is falling" complex.

What's actually falling, warns Skelly, is acid rain, a direct result of short-sighted theories that "the solution to pollution is dilution." To



The York Chamber of Commerce honored participants in the 1985 Ag Day farm-city exchange. From left are Bill Groft, Paul and Gail McPherson, Lorne Detter, chairman of the Chamber's Ag-Business committee, Robert Smyser and James Vallosio.

direct coal-fired factory and power plant emissions away from the ground, builders constructed towering stacks to carry pollutants into upper air levels. But emissions at that level combine with moisture to form acid rain, sometimes with a pH level nearly that of vinegar. Industrial and vehicular emissions also create ozone, one of the most critical pollutants to plants.

Both acid rain and high ozone

levels are economically affecting crops, especially sensitive ones such as grapes and white pine. While varieties are being developed to resist such pollutants, Skelly questions the value of genetic pollution resistance.

"It'll just result in more air pollution," he figures, projecting that scientists and environmentalists are neglecting the need to protect our long-term food supplies from the effects of filthy

air. Automobile exhaust controls, better engineering at pollution sources, plant breeding, protective plant sprays and legislation are all components of long-term solution to pollution.

Clean water — or lack of it — concerns water quality specialist Dr. Karen Mancl. High nitrate levels, which are prominent in numerous rural well water supplies, pose the greatest danger to

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