

# Agriculture is twenty years behind nutritional guidelines established by the USDA

**BY MARTHA J. GEHRINGER SCHAEFFERSTOWN** — The government issued dietary guidelines twenty years ago and agriculture has been trying to catch up ever since.

Dr. Audrey Maretski, State Leader of Family Living Programs for the Penn-State Cooperative Extension Service, made this point in her presentation on nutritional policy and agriculture at the annual meeting of the Lebanon County Cooperative Extension Service Tuesday.

Dr. Maretski described U.S. agriculture as trying to get in front of the nutritional and wellness parade. She noted, "The relation between nutrition and agriculture production could have been addressed 20 years ago, and should have been addressed 10 years ago."

In the past 20 years dietary advice has been published by such institutions as the heart

association, the cancer society, the USDA and HHS. Dr. Maretski explained that agriculture should have acted at that time.

These recommendations were related to maintaining ideal body weight, reducing total fat, reducing cholesterol, increasing complex carbohydrates and increasing fiber.

The recent guidelines issued by the USDA have changed slightly on the issue of body weight Dr. Maretski explained. In 1980 the guide was listed as maintaining ideal body weight. This was altered in the 1985 report to maintaining desirable body weight Dr. Maretski commented.

It is these guidelines, she explained that the American public is using "in regards to dietary modifications."

Dr. Maretski continued that since many consumers feel they are well informed and feel they have control over their health and

diets, they are willing to utilize the guides.

Today's consumer finds words like freshness, purity and light attractive, and will shun artificial colors and flavors Dr. Maretski pointed out. Also she noted, many marketers are responding to these concerns. They are developing products that have reduced calories and fat, and increased fruit and fiber.

According to Dr. Maretski, a Cornell study on ways to bring nutrition and agriculture together made several research recommendations. She mentioned four of the recommendations: a study of the biological availability of nutrients in food, a study of how and why anticarcinogens in certain foods work, a study on removal methods of cholesterol from eggs and milkfat, and a study on the rumen's bacteriological content to modify the fatty acid content of milk.

Dr. Maretski demonstrated that the trends in food consumption verify the consumer's desire for more fruit and fiber, and a decrease in sugar, fat and starch.

An understanding of and response to the markets is very important Dr. Maretski concluded since if you don't understand and repond, others will lead.

In other business, Denis Hoke presented the Lebanon County Master Farmer, Roy Alger. Alger is a dairyman from Palmyra. There he and his family farm 900 acres and milk 81 registered



Dr. Audrey Maretski explained how nutritional policy effects agriculture at the annual Lebanon County Extension banquet.



Ed Arnold was presented the 4-H Alumni Award at the Lebanon County Extension Banquet. He is currently a county commissioner and a part-time dairyman.

Holsteins.

Alger has served as president of the Mt. Joy Farmer's Cooperative for the past 12 years. He also serves as a director for API.

The Pennsylvania 4-H Alumni Award this year went to Ed Arnold. Arnold is presently in his second term as a Lebanon County Commissioner. He also works part-time on his family's dairy farm.

He is the Commissioner's Liaison to the Lebanon County 4-H Extension Board, and serves as president of SETCO which is a four county training and jobs program.

The election of officers results are: president, Mike Firestine; vice president, Hershey Bare; secretary, Alvena Kneasel; and treasurer, Karen Sellers.

## Nominees sought for 'Conservation Teacher of the Year'

HARRISBURG — Nominations are being accepted for the national "Conservation Teacher-of-the-Year" awards program according to Pat Weiss, executive director of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District Directors, Inc. The competition is open to all full time teachers working at the kindergarten through high school

level who have developed an outstanding program of conservation education.

The National Conservation Teacher-of-the-Year will receive \$1,000 in cash and an expense paid trip to Reno, Nevada for the 1987 annual convention of the National Association of Conservation

Districts. The national second place winner will receive a \$500 cash award and the first place regional winner will receive \$200.

Interested teachers can obtain information and nomination forms from the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District Directors, Inc.; telephone 717-236-1006.

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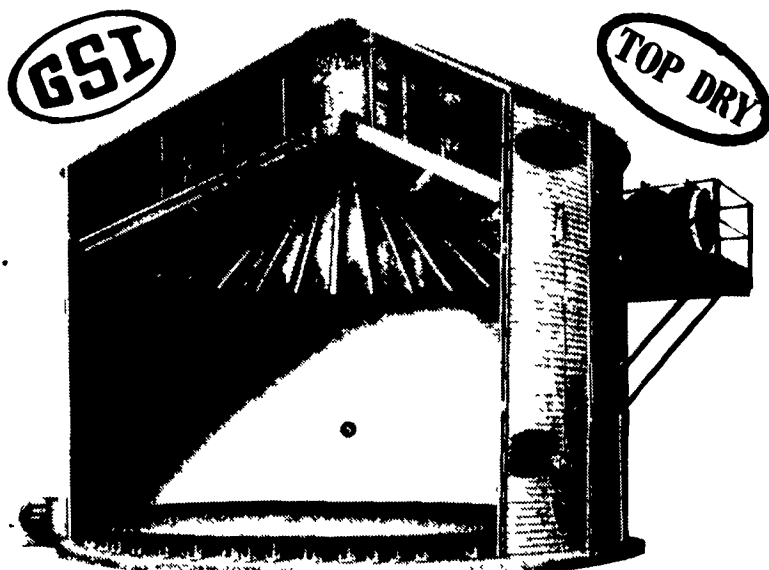
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