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Farmers Buy Packing Plant

BY MIRIAM GREENFIELD
Lebanon Co. Staff Correspondent
SHAMOKIN — "It's a great day for agriculture," Keith Eckel, president of Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, said Wednesday morning in Shamokin.

Eckel presented a plaque to Eugene Eisenbise of Hershey, president of PennMar Coop, a cooperative of 64 central Pennsylvania farmers—hog and cattle producers—who recently acquired the Shamokin Packing Co.

"The future of our marketing endeavor hangs in the balance," Eckel said. He was referring to the new role of the farmer, the evolution of the farmer from just producing food, to processing and marketing the food and getting it to the consumer.

We used to think of the farmer's job as a job very distant from the consumer, but Milestone Brands Cooperative, a division of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association has just taken the first step in bringing the farmer's role more in touch with the consumer. From now on, farmers will be processing and marketing as well as producing the food we eat.

The Shamokin Packing Company, which had been producing Chief brand hot dogs, hams, kielbasa, and other processed meat for over 25 years at the Shamokin site, will continue to operate under the ownership of PennMar Cooperative Inc. PennMar is a group of 64 central Pennsylvania hog and cattle producers who have incorporated to control processing and marketing as well as growing food.

PennMar acquired the Shamokin plant April 7 with the cooperation of the Pennsylvania Cooperative Marketing Association (PACMA) and Milestone Brands Cooperative, both divisions of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association. Royal Palmer, director of sale for Milestone Brands Cooperative, which includes PennMar and PACMA, said the plant manager Richard Bobkoskie and the 77 persons who

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Milk Promotion at Penn State

Ready to show the milk promotion trophy, Joe Paterno (left), coach of the Penn State Nittany Lions, and Donald Duncan, Chairman of the State Advisory Board of the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, kick off the milk promotion program last Saturday at the Penn State Blue & White football game.

The hand crafted milk can trophy will be awarded each year to the winner of the Penn State-Pitt football game on a rotating basis. In addition, a duplicate milk can will go to the winner of the Penn State-Temple game.

While these large trophies will move from college to college as the winner emerges, small replicas of the milk can will go to each player to keep as part of his college memorabilia.



Arnold Lueck celebrates 25 years on the job as Lancaster County's agronomy and horticulture expert. In the photo Lueck compares alfalfa samples at the Penn State research farm in Lancaster County. See story page 31

2nd Conservation Reserve Signup Begins Monday

HARRISBURG — Farmers who missed the boat the first time around will have a second chance to hop aboard the Conservation Reserve Program as of Monday. According to ASCS conservation program specialist, Richard Penney, the second CRP sign-up period will begin Monday, May 5 and end May 16.

The goal of CRP is to take the nation's highly erodible land out of cultivation. By removing more than 40 million acres of this marginal land from food production in the coming decade, SDA hopes to lower soil erosion while reducing crop surpluses.

Another benefit of the program, according to SCS resource conservationist Richard Heidecker, will be the creation of higher quality wildlife habitat. Since CRP acreage must be converted to permanent vegetative cover, such as grasses and trees, "this presents an ideal time to improve wildlife food and cover on farms," says Heidecker.

Wildlife returns the benefits to farmers through insect control. Some birds eat their weight in insects daily, Heidecker says. Farmers will receive annual rental payments after Oct. 1 of each calendar year for acreage that qualifies. CRP acreage may

not be farmed for 10 years.

In addition to annual rental payments, farmers can receive 50 percent of the cost of establishing permanent cover on the land.

In determining acceptable bids, USDA divided Pennsylvania into two bidding pools. Pool 1 included the southeastern part of the state, where the maximum acceptable bid was \$65. The remainder of the state was labeled pool 2, with a maximum bid of \$60.

During the March sign up, 397 bids were submitted on 13,662 acres, but only 2,463 acres on 93 farms were accepted. This was a long way from ASCS's goal of 82,000 acres during the initial sign-up.

Nationally, bids were accepted for 838,356 acres on 10,307 farms. The average price for all bids accepted was \$41.82.

Penn State extension economist William McSweeney thinks that the dairy herd buy-out program may well have contributed to CRP's anemic performance, since the buy-out sign-up overlapped CRP's sign-up period. "Farmers may find they have more time now to give the Conservation Reserve Program serious consideration," McSweeney said.

Those interested in the program should contact their county ASCS offices.

Ardrossan Cow Tops National Sale

BY MARTHA J. GEHRINGER
HARRISBURG — They expected her to be the belle of the sale and Ardrossan S U Class Bell didn't disappoint anyone as she garnered the high price of \$4,100 at the National Ayrshire Sale here on Friday, April 25.

This 4-year-old cow, bred and consigned by Ardrossan Farms, Mrs. H.H.M. Scott, Villanova, was purchased by the Don-Sher Farm and Lika Company from Ellenburg Center, NY.

She is the daughter of Oak Ridge Ace's Sultan. As a 2-year old she

produced a record of 17,060 pounds of milk and 705 pounds of fat with a 4.1 percent test.

Her dam, Ardrossan S.V.C. Belltime, produced a record of 23,050 pounds of milk and 867

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Ardrossan S U Class Bell was the high selling animal at the National Ayrshire Sale with the price of \$4,100. Pictured from left are: Sue Kulp, assistant herdsman at Ardrossan; Heinz Meilke, herd manager at Ardrossan; Don McNeil, buyer; Tom Whittaker, pedigrees; Milton Crosby, auctioneer; and Dale Maulfair at the lead.