

Bank sponsors Agri-business meeting

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS
Staff Correspondent

GILBERTSVILLE — Over 100 farmers gathered at the Gilbertsville Fire Company recently to participate in the annual Agri-Business Farmers Seminar sponsored by the National Bank of Boyertown. The 1986 seminar addressed the issues of diversification, stress management, and farm real estate values.

Pennsylvania agricultural leaders, National Bank of Boyertown officials, and local business associates were on hand to provide information to farmers as Charles Gehris, Vice President, National Bank of Boyertown, performed the introductions. Hoping to provide current information that would be beneficial in today's farming enterprise, the program featured J. Luther Snyder, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture; Michelle Rodgers, extension home economist; Richard Brandt, realtor; and Jack Moulton, director of operations, Farm Management Services.

The Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, J. Luther Snyder, began the day-long program with his presentation, "Pennsylvania Agriculture — Our Number One Industry."

"Farming is the third most stressful occupation there is," stated Michelle Rodgers as she continued the program. Rodgers spoke on stress management. More than just long hours and hard work, she went on to say, farming involves "critical timing, critical problem solving, and large sums of money." According to Rodgers, "managing ourselves" is most important to farmers.

"Stress is only negative when it hinders our performance . . . then it harms our body," Rodgers stated. She listed symptoms of stress including headaches, dizziness, a change in appetite, a tightness in the neck and shoulders, heartburn, and muscle aches, and ways to recognize it in yourself.

Rodgers cautioned, "worry is really a waste of time." She told farmers that only about eight percent of any worry could be positive, the rest is wasted because it is usually about a past event or something that cannot be changed.

"Identify farm stress," she continued, "and learn to understand and manage it." She promoted a change in lifestyle or

lifestyle management to control stress. She listed some "lifestyle management" practices: talk it out; get away, a five minute break, vacation, etc.; take one step at a time; work off anger — exercise; give in occasionally; go easy with criticism; take it easy; do something for someone else; laugh — a great medicine; and give yourself a pat on the back when you've done a good job.

Rodgers added that the main things that cause stress for farmers are uncontrollable. She advised, "make a change in lifestyles before you reach the crucial point."

Continuing the program was Richard E. Brandt, realtor. He spoke on farm values, appraisal criteria, and sales of farm land.



Richard Brandt

Stating that an appraisal is the "actual value" of the land, Brandt listed factors affecting a selling price. Location, soils, productivity,

interest rates, developmental rights, legislation, and foreign buyers, all have an effect on current land values. He predicted the dip in prices to be over but added, "tomorrow could change that very quickly."

Jack Moulton, director of operations, Farm Management Services, concluded the program with his topic, "Diversification, Is this the answer to survival". At the conclusion of his presentation, he listed several survival points for farmers to strive for in their daily operations. They are: keep good records; use an analysis of records; base management decisions on facts; listen to advice; watch excessive lenders of money; and develop a plan to achieve goals.

Patton named to marketing bureau

HARRISBURG — L. Jeffrey Patton has assumed the position of director of a newly created Bureau of Marketing Development in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, according to Agriculture Richard E. Grubb.

Patton, 30, of Allentown, was granted a leave of absence as Agricultural Programs Consultant with Pennsylvania Power & Light Co. to play a leading role in a reorganization the Department has initiated.

"His significant experience with agriculture, rural development and marketing is a tremendous asset as we set out to do even more in the vital areas of marketing and development," Grubb said.

Patton has more than seven years experience in agriculture, the last four in a capacity which involved him in working with the agricultural industry to promote

economic development in Pennsylvania.

"My career objectives mesh nicely with the Department's goal and ongoing effort to promote the growth of Pennsylvania agriculture," Patton said. "I'm pleased with the opportunity to share that commitment." He assumed the position today.

Under a planned reorganization, Patton will oversee activities now centered in the separate Bureaus of Marketing and Agricultural Development. The functions and staff of those bureaus will be placed in the Bureau of Marketing Development.

"By consolidating two bureaus that share similar goals of stimulating our agricultural economy and communities, we can better coordinate an overall strategy to achieve those ends,"

Grubb said.

One proposed change would elevate commodities promotional programs to division level status. "This reflects the importance of these programs and administratively will have a positive impact on them," Grubb said.

"The reorganization and Mr. Patton's employment will enhance our abilities to expand already successful marketing and development efforts, and carry out new export initiatives," Grubb said.

Gov. Thornburgh's proposed 1986 budget includes a \$300,000 appropriation to help companies and individuals enter the export market.

As an agricultural programs consultant with PP&L, Patton has designed and executed marketing and economic development programs for the state's farm

industry.

Before joining PP&L, Patton was employed from 1979-82 as Region 6 organization director for the Pennsylvania Farmers Association. He was responsible for membership, public affairs and information programs in an eight-county area.

He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in general agriculture, 1977, from Pennsylvania State University. He is a participant in the Pennsylvania Rural Leadership Program, Penn State College of Agriculture, and will remain so through 1988.

He was secretary-treasurer to the Pennsylvania Rural Development Committee, 1984-85, and serves on the Pennsylvania Farm Electrification Council to the Agricultural Advisory Council, Penn State College of Agriculture.

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