

Keister's Filled To Capacity For 5th Ag Days Celebration

BY CRAIG BINGMAN

Snyder County Correspondent

MIDDLEBURG — Close to 26,000 people attended the annual Ag Days at Keister's Auction here on June 17. Donald and Walter Keister, sponsors of the Ag Days, "beef up" their weekly auction once a year to promote Pennsylvania Agriculture. This year, their fifth promotion, proved to be their best.

The 1986 Ag Days celebration, located 3 miles east of Middleburg, Snyder County, treated visitors to a feast of farm delicacies. Beef and pork roasts, chicken barbeques, dairy products, and fresh fruits adorned the many stands set up for the event.

"We couldn't make the beef and pork fast enough this year," said Walt Keister, coordinator of the event. "We roasted six 230 pound hogs and went through 15 to 30 hams." Also, 1,700 halves of chicken were barbequed as well as the same number of beef sandwiches sold.

State Secretary of Agriculture Richard Grubb kicked off the steer sale where 500 were sold as compared to the usual 200 to 250. Also present were Luther Snyder, deputy secretary, and Gordon Hiller, the new regional director for the Department of Agriculture

in Williamsport.

Visitors to the event had plenty of opportunity to sample Pennsylvania foods, browse through the large flea market, and admire the many displays from area farm organizations under the 240-foot tent.

As Secretary Grubb toured the Ag Days, he related to the media how impressed he was with the promotion of agriculture at this event. "A promotion like this tells consumers to buy local," he said. "Pennsylvania Agriculture is our number one industry and it has to do a better job at promoting itself."

Also present at the Ag Days were the many queens and princesses representing their areas of agriculture. Those royalty present were: Cattleman's Queen and Princesses, Red Cherry Queen, Lamb and Wool Queen and Princess, Grape Queen, Honey Queen, Draft Horse and Mule Association Queen, Strawberry Queen, and Dairy State and S.U.N. Area Princesses. The girls served VIP's, media, and other officials their respective dishes at a special brunch to represent their agricultural organization. They were also on hand during the day to offer to the public samples of their products.

Since 1982, the Ag Days celebration has grown remarkably well due to publicity, coordination,

and the cooperation of the weather. So successful was this, the fifth year, that previously unused parking facilities were filled to

capacity. "I think we're about as big as we want to get," said Keister.



Queens representing the state's commodity groups included (front, left) Becky Painter, Cattleman's Queen; Kimberly Himes, Grape Queen; Carol Mumma, Honey Queen; Sue Eck, Strawberry Queen; Rhonda Lindsay, Draft Horse and Mule Queen; Denise Thomas SUN Area Dairy Princess. (Back, left) Karen Rabenold, Cattleman's Princess; Dana Ernst, Cattleman's Princess; Kim Detwiler, Red Cherry Queen; Lisa Shaffer, Lamb and Wool Queen; Kelly Bergstresser, Lamb and Wool Princess; Beth Heald, State Dairy Princess.

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