

# Penn State Specialists Speak At Ag Progress Days

UNIVERSITY PARK — Penn State's Ag Progress Days is big, with tens of thousands of visitors mingling with massive equipment exhibits and circus-size tents housing agricultural products and exhibits.

But Ag Progress Days is small, too, in the ways that matter most. Penn State's agricultural specialists and researchers will be on hand during the three-day affair to speak about a variety of subjects as well as answer questions, on a one-to-one basis, from Ag Progress Days visitors.

Drawing on the University's long-standing research base, the specialists will address many consumer and community concerns: Rural drinking water supplies — why problems continue

to surface and what to do about them; 4-H — find out why more than 70,000 Pennsylvania youth keep coming back; Home gardening — the latest on low maintenance gardening with ground-covers; Meat — the low-down on the pros and cons of red meat; Acid rain — researchers report on the latest findings about its causes and implications in Pennsylvania, the state with the most acidic rainfall in the nation.

These and many other topics will be covered by speakers in the Wickes Forum Building during Ag Progress Days. The program, called "The Specialists Speak" will feature 20-minute presentations beginning at 10:30 a.m. and running through 3:30 p.m. each of the three days. A detailed schedule

will be available during the event.

Visitors who want further information about a specific presentation, or who have questions related to any of the topics, will find the Penn State specialists on duty in the adjacent "Ask the Specialists Tent." Building on its new design from last year, the tent will again feature life-size replicas of agricultural products and

machinery designed by Penn State's theatre arts designers.

The "Ask the Experts" tent will be divided into six sections: horticulture and home grounds; production agriculture; forestry, natural resources and wildlife; agricultural economics; family living; and 4-H youth activities. 4-H representatives will exhibit clothing and textile displays, and family living specialists will focus

on vegetables for health and fitness. The other groups will offer exhibits and information covering a broad range of ideas and topics.

Ag Progress Days is scheduled from August 19-21 at Penn State's Rock Springs Agricultural Research Center on Route 45, nine miles west of State College. Admission and parking are free. The event runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

## Poultry Surveillance Is Still Strong

Two and a half years after its start, the Pennsylvania Poultry Surveillance system is running at full tilt, thanks to the cooperation of the many processing plants involved in the program.

As of July 1, a total of 105 egg

processing plants and 22 hatcheries representing over 800 producers were involved in the testing program. Six meat processing plants and five custom slaughter plants representing another estimated 200 producers

are also involved.

A typical month involves the testing of approximately 13,500 samples, including some 7,000 eggs, 5,000 blood samples and 1,500 "others."

Shirley Pflieger program coordinator says that "almost every large producer" is being checked for AI and other poultry diseases and that samples are being taken by state inspectors during routine monthly inspections at egg packing plants. Birds at slaughter plants are bled by plant personnel and samples are submitted to state laboratories for testing.

While it is hopeful that no new positive samples will be found, it is good to know that any new outbreaks will be found before they get a chance to spread to a large portion of the poultry population.

In fact, the surveillance system is credited for the early detection of AI last winter. That early detection enabled officials from the state and federal government to keep the disease confined to a three county area away from the large concentration of commercial poultry in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania is still the only state in the country with a statewide surveillance system for poultry. USDA-APHIS has urged other large poultry states to follow Pennsylvania's example. (Poultry Post)



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