

Century Farm

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own the family farm purchased in 1884 or 102 years ago.

The featured speaker of the evening was H. Louis Moore, professor of agricultural economics, Penn State University. Dr. Moore spoke on the subject "Agriculture Our Pride Our Problem".

"We often take agriculture for granted," Moore said. "In agriculture we have an aura of romance and tradition. Farming that is a so-called way of life. Though it isn't that way any more, it does hold a certain aura of tradition that is really good. Agricultural industry and farm retailing is the biggest industry we have," Moore said.

Twenty percent of our gross national product comes from agricultural-related industry starting at the farm and going on through to retail. We have astounding technological advances. Where one farmer fed 15 people in 1950, now one farmer feeds somewhere in the 90s. This advance has been so rapid that USDA doesn't even try to measure it anymore.

Listing some of the problems of agriculture, Moore said that our national economy has experienced four years of growth but farming has not shared in this growth. "The food security act of 1985 is the first farm bill that didn't have ag in the title," Moore said. "It makes you think. Is it a food bill or an agricultural bill? Other farm problems include the fact that exports have decreased and farm land values have decreased, especially in the midwest where they have a total grain economy. Food is cheap," Moore said. "There is no other way to describe it. We spend about 15 percent of our

incomes for food. In Russia they spend 37 percent, and in China they spend 60 percent. We can take pride in the fact that farmers are feeding our people very well and

very inexpensively," Moore said.

In the awards program, Jay Irwin, Lancaster County agent, introduced the century farm families. And Robert Zook, chairman of the agricultural

committee for the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry, made the presentations. Jessica May, chairman of the Lancaster Chamber Board, brought greetings. James Kreider was master of ceremonies. The invocation was given by

Reverend J. Wade Groff, pastor of the Strasburg Mennonite Church. Two 4-H speeches were given by Stacy Nestleroth and Lorri Rutt. And the closing remarks were given by Richard Blouse, Jr., president of the Lancaster Chamber.



Mahlon and Hazel G. Charles, Marietta.



Henry and Hazel Reist, Mount Joy.



Rodney and Mary Lou Houser, Lancaster.



Robert and Jane Houser, Willow Street.



Warren and Alverta Buch, Lititz.



Jay and Lois Boll, Mount Joy.

PFGC

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"Keeping input costs down is critical," Jorgensen continued. "Let the alfalfa provide more of the protein when it's most critical. Corn silage comes into the diet at about 60 days post-calving up until the cow goes dry."

While some sources claim that the percentage of total digestible nutrients in corn silage averages in the 70-percent range, in reality the figure is closer to alfalfa's TDN of 62 to 63 percent, according to Jorgensen.

In one experiment he reviewed, the researcher pointed out that cows produced more milk on a diet of high quality alfalfa and only 20 percent grain than they did when grain was the predominant ration and the alfalfa used was of lower quality harvested in the bloom stage.

Jorgensen stressed, though, that realizing alfalfa's full potential means paying close attention to management from planting to storage. The legume should be harvested no later than mid- to late-bud stage. Forage cut early, even when rain falls on the cut crop, is still better quality than alfalfa cut at the bloom stage, he said.

Proper handling is also critical to preserving quality, he said. "I do not believe that equipment companies have made much progress in preserving the quality of the crop in storage," Jorgensen said. In one Wisconsin study, standing alfalfa with a crude protein level of 25 percent dropped to 21 percent protein at the time it was fed following storage.

"Corn and soybeans are considered the golden feedstuffs," Jorgensen summed up. "In reality the profitability lies with the alfalfa plant."

While producing quality forage is the first step in dairy profitability, it's equally important to be able to utilize the forage in a ration program. Penn State's

STATE COLLEGE — The presentation of the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council's Special Award and County Agent Award highlighted the organization's Annual Forage Conference held at Penn State's Keller Conference Center on Tuesday.

Honored for contributions to the state's forage and livestock industries was Mike Balas, recipient of this year's Special Award. Balas

Extension dairy specialist Richard Adams addressed the subject of formulating a nutrition program.

Ration problems that Adams finds common among the state's dairymen include incorrect amounts of concentrate, salt, vitamin D, phosphorus, selenium and vitamin E in the ration.

Adams stressed the importance of monitoring every facet of the feed program, testing all components of the ration at least quarterly, and recalibrating feeding equipment on a monthly basis.

Farmers had the opportunity to hear how several of their fellow producers managed their forages during a panel discussion during the afternoon moderated by conference co-chairman Dr. Sidney Bosworth. The panel included Tom Craig of Murmac Farms, Bellefonte (Centre Co.); Ross Orner Jr. of Orner Farms, Rockton (Clearfield Co.); and Enos Tice of Tice-Platz, Boynton (Somerset Co.).

Discussing crop rotations was Penn State farm management specialist William Waters. Waters noted that the low price of corn has resulted in more grain being substituted for forage crops, making crop rotations difficult to maintain. In general, farmers should keep between 25 percent and 50 percent of their cropland in row crops at any one time, he recommended.

currently serves as editor in the Marketing Communications Department at New Holland, Inc.

A graduate of Penn State University, Balas served for several years as assistant editor of Pennsylvania Farmer magazine and later became editor of New Holland News.

Balas has served on the board of directors of both PFGC and the American Forage and Grassland Council. Through Balas' efforts, New Holland, Inc., has provided strong financial support to state and national forage council activities, including their forage days, workshops, congresses and Ag Progress Days.

This year PFGC offered its first County Agent Award in recognition of county agents who have demonstrated strong support of grassland agriculture. The council's first recipient is John Shearer, county extension director in Franklin County.

Shearer has been a consistent supporter of a strong forage-based dairy industry through the extension programs he has instituted. Since Shearer began his Franklin extension career, the county has led all others in participation in the state alfalfa growers program, and two grand champions have been named from his county.

Shearer is also credited with bringing agencies, producers and industry together in support of grassland programs.

Also recognized at the conference were the champions of the Ag Progress Days Hay Show held in August. Jay McCarrell of Eighty Four was cited for topping both the field-cured and heat-dried divisions. McCarrell's entry in the field-cured division yielded the following percentages: crude protein 23.8, neutral detergent fiber 35.12, acid detergent fiber 28.96. His winning heat-dried entry had the following analysis: CP

25.55, NDF 25.63, ADF 24.12.

David Witmer of Carlisle took top honors in the division where

hay preservatives were used. His winning numbers were: CP 24.26, NDF 33.25, ADF 30.01.



PFGC president Richard Hill (center) congratulates two men for outstanding contributions to the forage industry. Mike Balas (left) received the organization's Special Award and John Shearer was the first recipient of the council's County Agent Award.



Ag Progress Days Hay Show champs were honored at the Forage Conference. From left are Jay McCarrell and R. David Witmer.